THE

AMERICAN WEST

COVER:

Indian scene by Henry F. Farny, ca. 1901. Farny, born in 1847 in Alsace, Germany, came to New York with his family in 1853, and for a period during the 1880's and 1890's was one of the chief illustrators for Harper's *magazine. In the two decades preceding his death in 1916, he developed into an accomplished painter of Indian scenes and Western life. The original of our cover painting is in the Honeyman Collection of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.* *(For more information regarding the Honeyman Collection, see page 13.)*

THE
AMERICAN
WEST

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THE AMERICAN WEST

Magazine of the Western History Association

November, 1967, Volume IV, Number 4

4 **Western Limits of the Buffalo Range** *by Francis Haines*

13 **Collector's Choice: Entrance to the Bay of San Francisco** *by John Barr Tompkins*

16 **Legend of Destiny** *by Cecil Robinson*

19 **Soiled Doves and Ornamental Culture** *by Ronald L. Davis*

26 **Out West in a Palace Car** *by Richard Reinhardt*

35 **Religion and Superstition** *by Nicolas Point, S.J. translated by Joseph P. Donnelly, S.J.*

45 **Stampede Towns of the Upper Yukon** *by David Wharton*

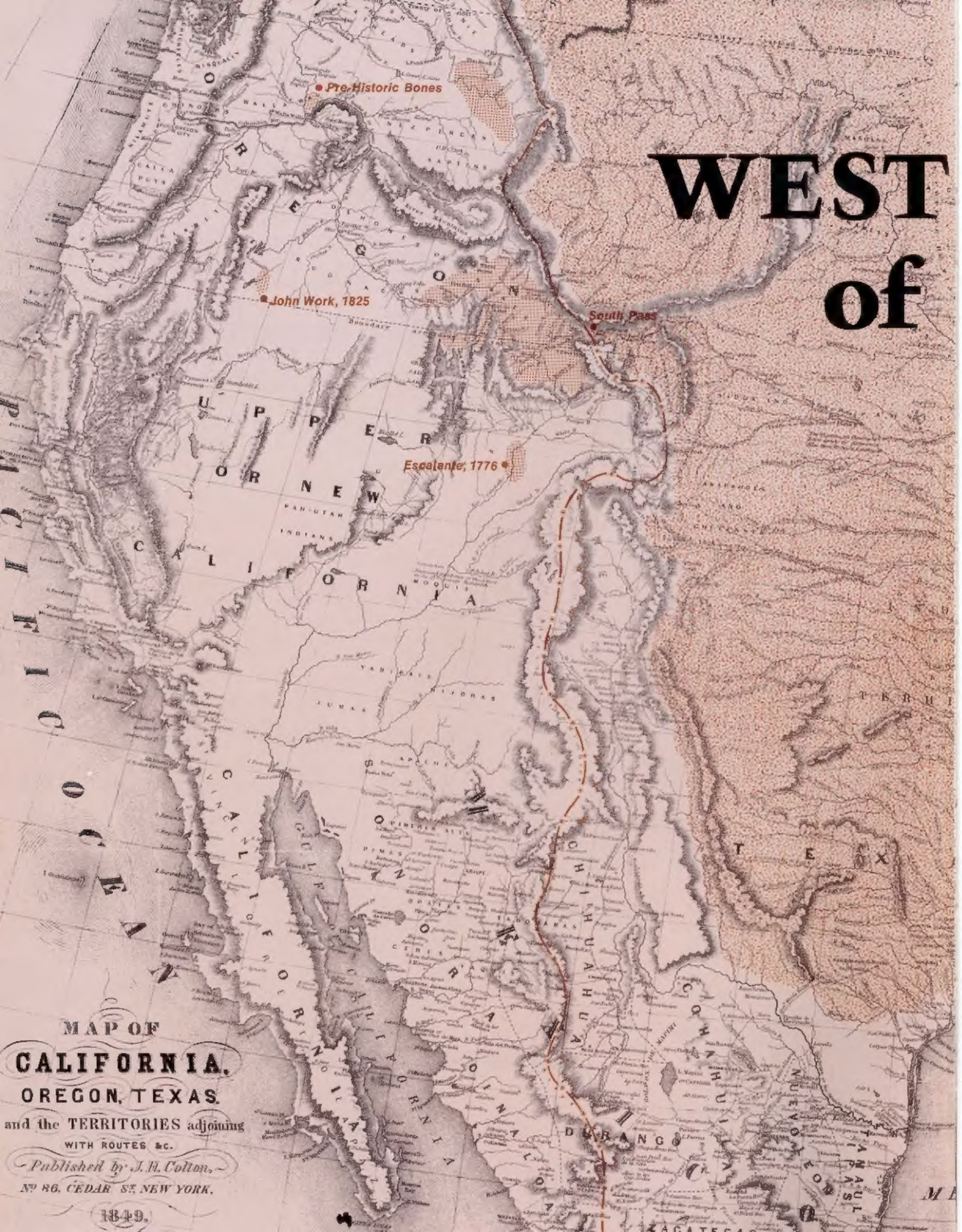
53 **The Trip to Town** *by Milton E. Shatraw*

55 **The Bear of the North** *by Roger Olmsted*

78 **Portraits for a Western Album: A Busted Cowboy's Christmas** *by John I. White*

About the authors, p. 65; picture credits, p. 77; information about the Western History Association, p. 80

Frontispiece: The Betatakin Cliff Dwellings. From the forthcoming Sierra Club book, Navajo Wildlands: As Long As the Rivers Shall Run *by Stephen Gett, with photographs by Philip Hyde.*



WESTERN LIMITS of the Buffalo Range

BY FRANCIS HAINES

"I came upon some plains so vast that in my travels I did not reach their end, although I marched over them for more than three hundred leagues. On them I found so many cattle that it would be impossible to estimate their number, for there was not a single day until my return that I lost sight of them."

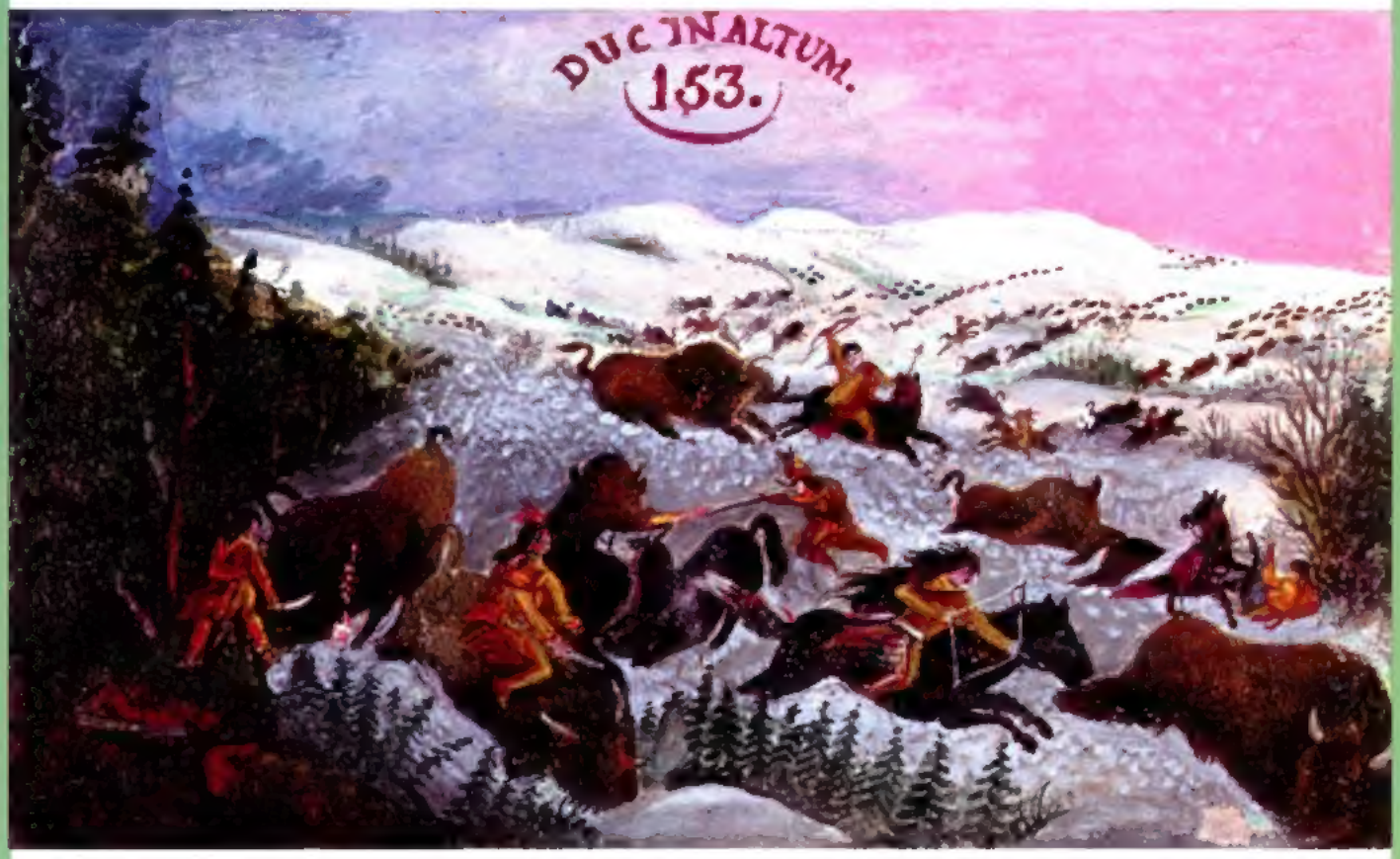
MAP LEGEND

- *Continental Divide*
- *Buffalo Range*
- *Marginal Buffalo Territory*

This is the report of Francisco de Coronado, who saw the buffalo of the Great Plains in 1541. He went on to say, "These Indians subsist entirely on cattle, for they neither plant nor harvest maize. With the skins they build their houses; with the skins they clothe and shoe themselves; from the skins they make ropes and also obtain wool. From the sinews they make thread, with which they sew their clothing and likewise their tents. From the bones they shape awls, and the dung they use for firewood, since there is no other fuel in all that land. The bladders serve as jugs and drinking vessels. They sustain themselves on the flesh of the animals, eating it slightly

Continued on page 8

The Buffalo Hunt



From the Journals of Father Nicolas Point, 1840–1847

The paintings on this and the facing page, and on pages 10 and 11, were executed by Nicolas Point, S. J., as illustrations to his recollections of life among the Indians of the northern Rocky Mountains. These journals have been published for the first time this fall by Holt, Rinehart and Winston as Wilderness Kingdom, *translated and edited by Joseph P. Donnelly, S. J.*

The illustration above is a scene from the winter hunt with the Flathead Indians in 1842. The oval vignettes are general scenes of summer buffalo hunts of the Flatheads, Coeur d'Alenes, and Blackfeet. More of Father Point's paintings, together with extracts from his journals, appear on pages 34 through 43.

The journal account below describes the winter hunt shown on this page.

"On February 29, a Sunday, there was a strong wind; the sky was overcast; there was an icy cold, no pasturage for the horses, and the buffalo had been frightened away by the Nez Percés. The cold was intense, the barrenness was depressing, and the snow was troublesome. But yesterday's rest had been a blessing and today we were marching in the name of the Lord. Confidence! Toward midday, we reached the summit of a high mountain. What a change! The sun shown, the cold was less intense, and we had before us an extensive plain. On this plain was good pasture where there were groups of buffalo. The camp halted; the hunters assembled and knelt to invoke the help of their patron. They then set out, and before the sun sank they had taken one hundred fifty buffalo. It must be admitted that if this hunt was not miraculous, it at least resembled very much the catch of fishes which was miraculous. Peter had cast his net in the name of the Lord and caught one hundred fifty-three fishes. The Flatheads had observed Sunday in the name of the Lord and bagged one hundred fifty-three buffalo, a wonderful catch. It was also a hunt wonderful to behold."

"When a herd has been sighted, the scout quickly returns to camp, his gun raised in the air as a sign that the buffalo have been discovered."

"At the announcement of the sighting of game, the whole camp rejoiced."

"Before a large-scale running hunt those who were to participate knelt and recited their prayers."

roasted. They eat raw fat without warming it, and drink the blood just as it comes from the cattle. They have no other food."

The American bison continued to range the Great Plains until they were almost entirely exterminated about 1880, and it is with the plains and the culture of the Plains Indians that we associate the bison—or buffalo, as they have commonly been called. Yet the buffalo grazed considerably westward from the rolling prairies, and their importance in the life and culture of Indian peoples makes a determination of the western limits of the buffalo range a matter of more than casual interest. In establishing the edge of the buffalo range during historic times, it is necessary to distinguish between permanent range, where herds were found every year; a marginal belt, where herds were found occasionally; and submarginal places, where small herds appeared once in a century or two.

Although several bulletins of the Bureau of Biological Survey have discussed the extent of the buffalo range in specific states, and the entire western border was drawn by W. T. Hornaday, these works are of questionable value to the historian since they make no distinction between the permanent range, the marginal belt, and the limits reached by small stray bands. Neither do these writers distinguish between historic and prehistoric data. There have been some excavations of Indian camp sites and caves in the last thirty years that have provided new data, and at least two of the old stories have proved questionable.

In Canada, the northern limit of the buffalo range may be set at the Liard River, on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains. This whole area, from the mountains eastward to the Athabasca and Mackenzie rivers, was well stocked with buffalo at the time it was first explored by white men. For the most part, the forest here is open enough to permit the growth of a number of grasses, and there are numerous parklike openings in the timber The buffalo shunned the muskeg country to the east and made no effort to cross the mountains to the west. A few vague reports of a buffalo or two having been found on the headwaters of the Columbia could refer only to an occasional stray, probably an old bull. A number of first-hand accounts of the passes through the Rockies, given by Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson, Alexander Ross, Ross Cox, George Simpson, Archibald McDonald and Paul Kane over the period 1793-1847 do not make a single reference to buffalo or buffalo sign west of the Continental Divide, nor do they list a single instance of buffalo having been reported by Indians of the upper Columbia Valley.

In 1793, Alexander Mackenzie reported buffalo along his route until he entered the mountain gorges of the Peace River. Although his report contains many observations concerning the animal life along the way, he made no further reference to buffalo or buffalo sign until he reached the lower Peace River on his return trip the following spring. There one old Indian hunter claimed that the buffalo had come in from the southeast within recent years, following the elk.

A decade after Mackenzie, David Thompson found buffalo on the eastern foothills of the Rockies and even in some of the mountain valleys. "Near the head of the eastern defile we had the good fortune to kill two bison cows; the animals often frequent the gorges of the mountains for fresh grass, water, and free[dom] from flies, but are careful not to be shut in by impassible [sic] rocks, and on being hunted, uniformly make for the open country."

In 1825, on his inspection trip to the western posts of the Hudson's Bay Company, Sir George Simpson "found many tracks of Buffalo & deer" on the eastern slopes of Yellowhead Pass, but there were none near the Divide nor to the west of it. Seemingly the buffalo avoided the dense forests of the western slopes, although they were quite at home under the more scattered trees of the eastern slope.

From the Liard River south to Mullan Pass, near Helena, Montana, the Rockies evidently formed a barrier that the buffalo did not cross. Since the animals avoided even the rather easy passes, this barrier evidently consisted of a change in vegetation. In Wyoming, the buffalo ranged rather high in the mountains. The herds in Yellowstone Park prosper at elevations of 8,000 feet or more.

There are at least four easy passes for buffalo across the Continental Divide in southern Montana: Mullan Pass, near Helena; Deer Lodge Pass, just south of Butte; Monida Pass, south of Dillon; and Reynold's Pass, from the Madison River across to Henry's Lake. Each of these passes has an easy approach on both sides and good grazing. There are no heavily timbered gorges or canyons such as are found on most of the passes, and which appear to be effective barriers to grazing buffalo herds.

This concentration of good passes across the Continental Divide is the result of rather drastic geological

A contrasting view of the buffalo saga, drawn in the 1820's by the early American artist Peter Rindisbacher.

changes in former ages. Millions of years ago, the Continental Divide ran along the present ranges of the Belt and Bridger mountains. At that time a lake filled the Helena Valley. The drainage from this lake and from Yellowstone Lake was to the west through the mountains. Then the waters broke through the Belt Mountains in the imposing canyon called Gate of the Mountains, leaving the old stream beds and valleys to the west dry, to furnish wide, easy passage from the headwaters of the Missouri to the Clark's Fork of the Columbia and to the upper Snake River drainage in southeastern Idaho.

The buffalo herds had easy routes to follow through the belt of mountains that once was the Divide. Little Prickly Pear Creek is a bypass, just to the north of Gate of the Mountains, from the grazing lands into the Helena Valley. A wide gap stretches from the head of Musselshell River west into Gallatin Valley. But the best route is up the Yellowstone River and through the gap, several miles wide, between the Bridger Range and the Gallatin Range, and down into the Gallatin Valley.

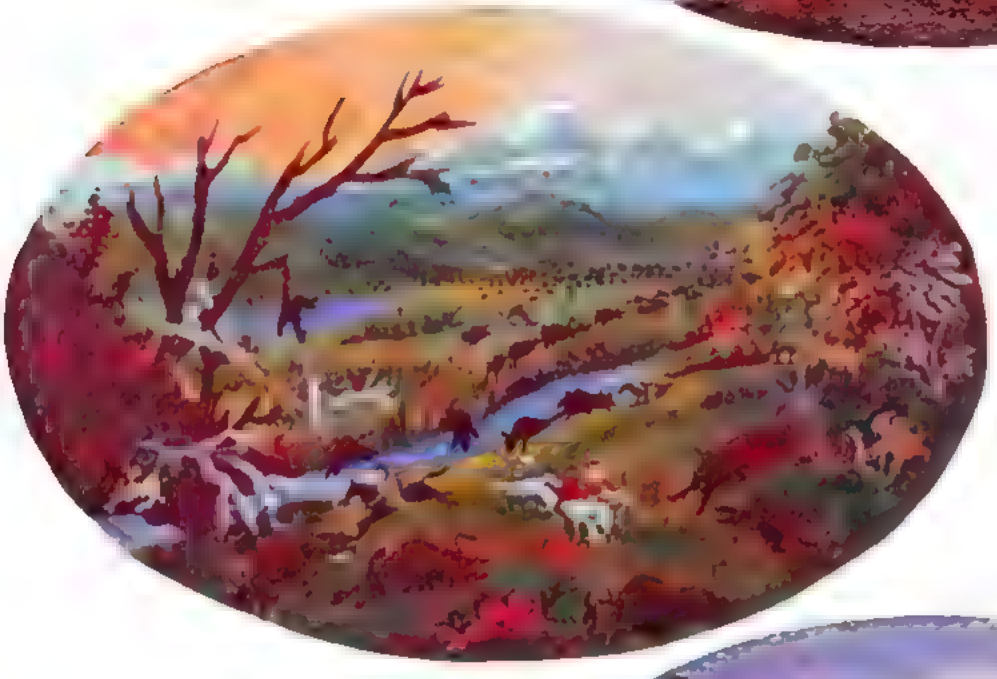
Buffalo herds had little trouble reaching Deer Lodge Valley, where they were hunted occasionally into the 1830's. Not so many went on down Clark's Fork to the Bitterroot, although the Indians reported that they had killed a great number there in the past and a large number of buffalo skulls were still in evidence there in 1853. That year, one lone bull went down Clark's Fork to Horse Plains, where he was killed by the Indians.

A few buffalo bones dug from village sites near the mouth of the Snake River indicate that some buffalo ranged that far west a few thousand years ago. Such herds would have come down Clark's Fork to Lake Pend Oreille, across to Spokane Falls, and on southwest another hundred and fifty miles to the Columbia. The Indians around Spokane Falls had an account of a small herd of buffalo living around one of the pothole lakes near Sprague. Two Coeur d'Alene Indians told James Teit that around 1815 their ancestors had killed two buffalo bulls at Tekoa, forty miles south and east of Spokane, but the fur post, Spokane House, makes no mention of the event.

The evidence indicates that at least two, and probably several, small herds of buffalo came as far west as central Washington during the last few thousand years, but

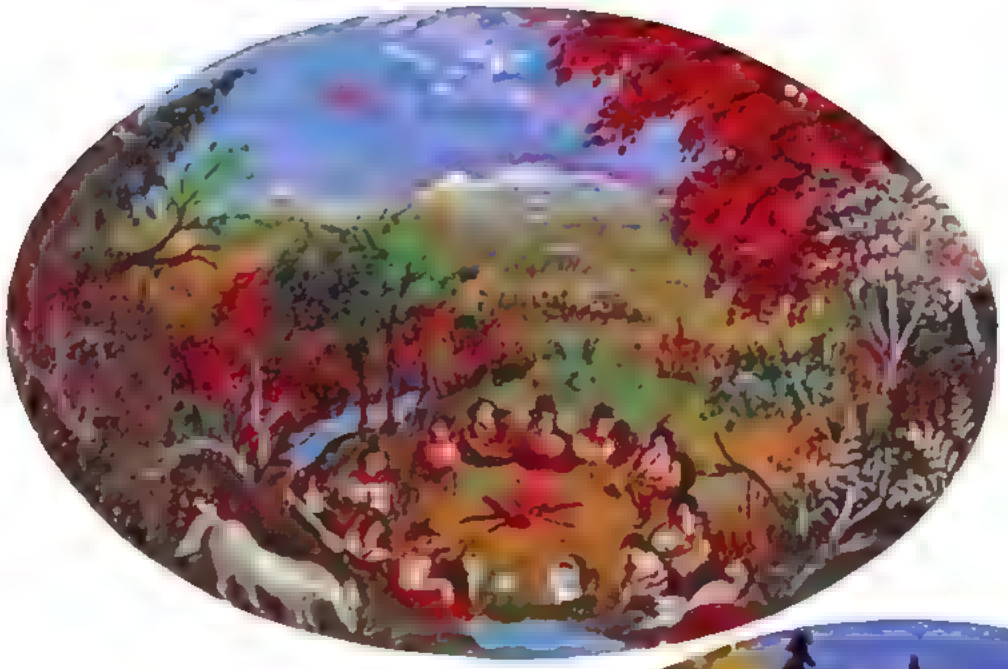
Continued on page 12

"With the wind in their faces the Indian hunters awaited a signal from their chief to set their horses at full gallop."



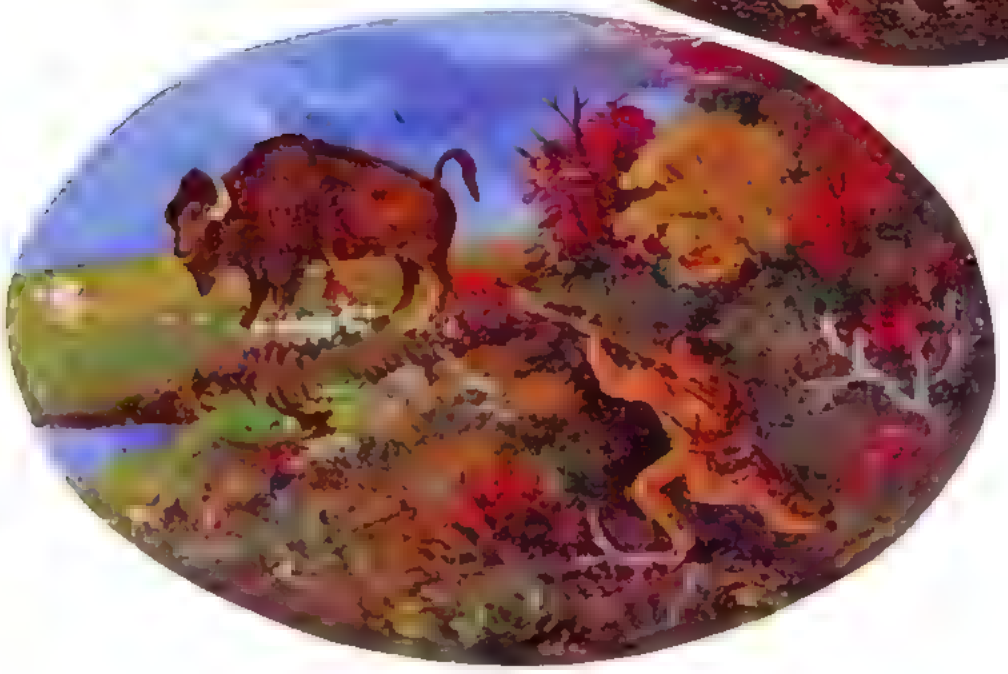
"During the great hunt columns of frightened animals detach themselves from the main herd and flee in different directions."

"For the ordinary hunter the best weapon was the bow."



"In the evening, hunters gathered together for conversation and to smoke the calumet around the fire."

"A buffalo with scarcely a breath of life still found strength to avenge its blood."



"For the superior hunter the best weapon was the rifle."

that there have been none in that area since 1800. In fact, the old bull killed at Horse Plains in 1853 is the only authentic buffalo kill reported west of Deer Lodge in historic times.

The herds that reached the Columbia evidently did not prosper, but were soon all killed. Extensive excavations of old cave dwellings at the mouth of Palouse River in the last four years reveal no trace of buffalo bones in the debris of the last 8,000 years. The Nez Percé who live just up river have a folk tale, also known to the Okanogan and Thompson Indians, which tells how Coyote, their cultural hero, tried to bring buffalo across the mountains but managed to get them only as far as the Bitterroot Valley. All this is a strong indication that few, if any, buffalo came to the Columbia Basin; or that if any did come, they did not survive there long.

While buffalo were found west of the Continental Divide in large numbers in southern Idaho, they were confined to a comparatively narrow strip stretching from north to south near the Wyoming border. Here formidable natural barriers prevented any significant movement of the herds to the west along the desert plateau, which had been formed in ancient times by a succession of large lava flows.

The plateau slopes gently for 300 miles from east to west, completely filling the space from the Salmon River Mountains of central Idaho to the mountain ranges of northern Nevada. The surface of the plateau is rough and is covered by a desert growth of artemisia and cactus, which makes an effective barrier to buffalo.

Through the middle of the plateau, from American Falls almost all the way to Oregon, the Snake River has carved a deep canyon. From the mountains to the north, a recent lava flow called Craters of the Moon cuts across the plateau nearly to the Snake River. From the Nevada mountains to the south, two streams, Salmon Falls Creek and Bruneau River, have carved box canyons to the Snake River.

This combination of canyons and deserts prevents any possible passage of buffalo from the upper Snake drainage to the country below the Snake River Canyon, except through a very narrow corridor between the base of the Salmon River Mountains and the new lava flows. Some small herds of buffalo moved west along this route, crossed the Snake River near the mouth of the Boise River, and worked their way up the Malheur River, in eastern Oregon.

The buffalo did not thrive in the good range country north of the Malheur. So far, the only remains of the herds found have been in the west, around Harney Lake, and a hundred miles to the south of the lake, at the western foot of Steens Mountains.

In 1825, John Work found a large number of buffalo skulls on the margin of Harney Lake, but no sign of live buffalo. In that lake the skulls could have been preserved for many years, but they nevertheless are proof that at least one small herd wandered that far west as recently as the last three hundred years or so.

L. S. Cressman found some buffalo bone fragments in an old Indian cave he excavated at the base of Steens Mountains. These are a few thousand years older than the Harney Lake skulls, but their small number suggests again that a stray herd came into the valley and in a few years was exterminated. Some unusual combination of natural conditions drove small herds of buffalo west, where the animals were not able to survive.

In historic times, southern Idaho buffalo herds stayed east of a line drawn from Big Lost River to Idaho Falls, down the river to American Falls, and south along the western slopes of the Portneuf and Bear rivers, which run through the eastern edge of the desert scrub. The same sort of circumstances that drove small herds west at times drove some south to the Great Salt Lake and on southeast into the Green River Valley, in eastern Utah.

The Spanish explorer Escalante reported a few buffalo along the Green River at Brush Creek in 1776. Jedediah Smith found a few just east of Great Salt Lake some fifty years later, and Joe Walker killed one stray just north of the lake in 1833.

While buffalo herds were abundant in southeastern Idaho in historic times, it is interesting to note that the Indians there believed that the white men had brought them in. This would indicate a large influx of the animals about 1800. The absence of buffalo wallows and deeply worn trails would support this theory and would lead to the conclusion that the upper Snake country was a marginal buffalo area.

Just north across the Continental Divide, in southwestern Montana, the upper Missouri drainage shows signs of long occupancy by large buffalo herds. There are several large buffalo jumps there, where the Indians drove animals over cliffs to their death, and the accumulation of bones from the butchered animals form an imposing heap.

Continued on page 66

COLLECTOR'S CHOICE

Number 1 in a Series

"Entrance to the Bay of San Francisco"

BY JOHN BARR TOMPKINS

THE SIMULTANEOUS ARRIVAL off the Golden Gate of *Flying Cloud* and the *John L. Stephens*, as drawn by Thomas A. Ayres in 1855, is not substantiated by a check of existing records. Both vessels were famous. The clipper ship *Flying Cloud* held the east-west record around Cape Horn, the only way to go (by sea) in those days; and the Panama Mail Steamship Company's *John L. Stephens* was the first of her class to reach San Francisco.

Flying Cloud, which Ayres had painted some years earlier, is shown standing in toward the Golden Gate, with a fair wind and under reduced canvas, clear evidence that this was not the end of a record run. Had this been the case, her master would have carried all canvas until the last possible minute. In those days, passages around the Horn were measured down to the minute.

The schooner running close-hauled in the foreground may well have been the pilot vessel of that day, although she lacks identification as such. It was not uncommon for a vessel of this size to show only two men on deck during decent weather, nor was it unusual for one man to launch a small boat single-handed. The schooner is in a position to put her boat over in order that the pilot may board the steamship. The broken spar at the right of the drawing may have been nothing more than "local color," since more than a few vessels, sail and steam, came to grief in these waters.

The telegraph station on top of Point Lobos was the second erected in San Francisco, and the first to command the sea approaches. The first telegraph station had been built on Telegraph Hill, and in October 1852, these stations were connected by California's first electric telegraph lines, thereby speeding notification to the people of San Francisco of the arrival of ships. The Point Bonita Light, visible at the far left of the drawing, was later replaced by a lower light, upon which sailors of today rely.

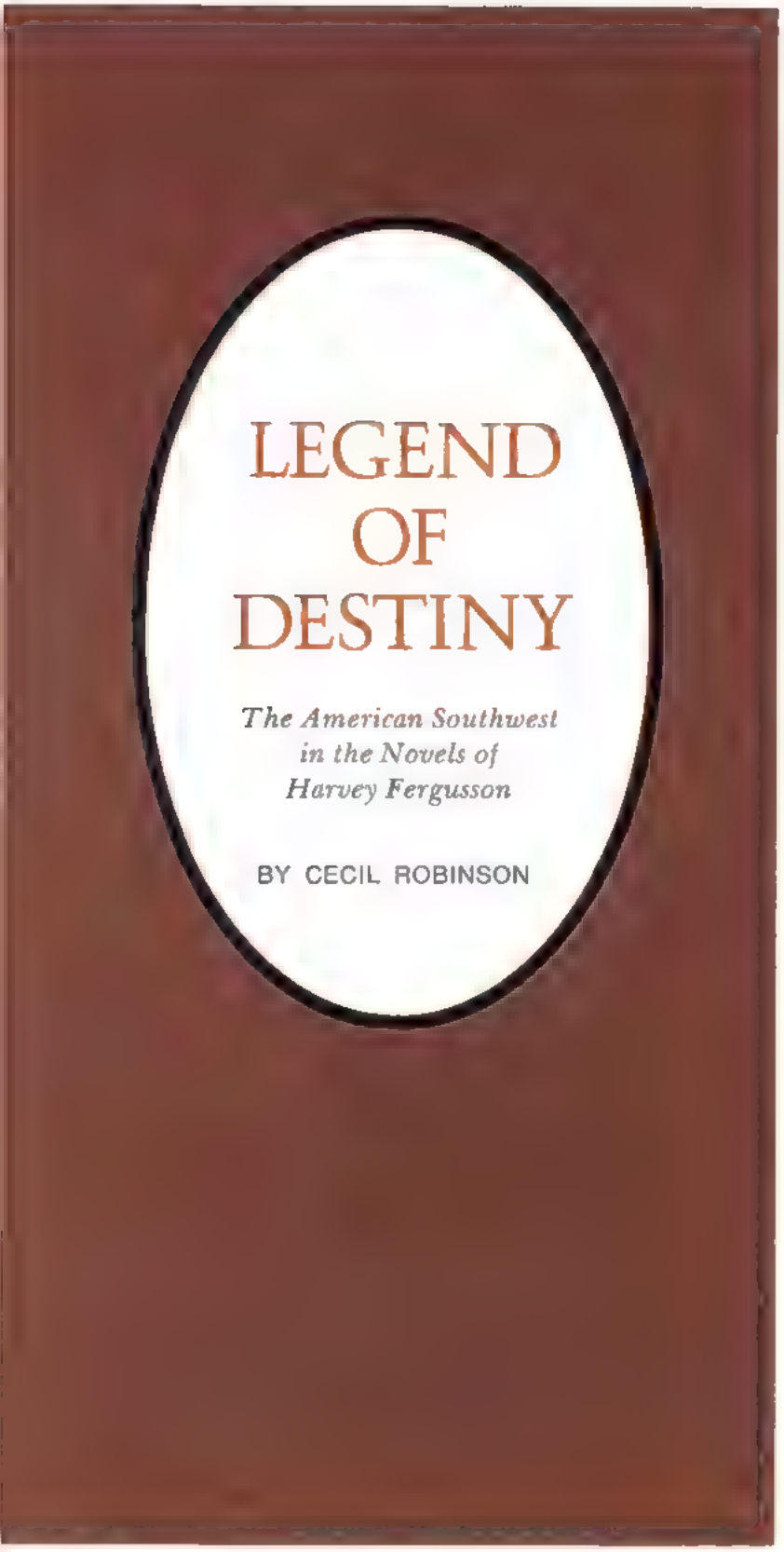
Ayres' works are to be found in various collections in Northern California. Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley, has two of his Yosemite originals, and the Yosemite Museum has about a dozen; the M. H. deYoung Museum of San Francisco has a number of Bay Area pen sketches. Ayres' last commission, undertaken for Harper and Brothers in 1856, is not on record. The artist completed his Southern California drawings, and took passage on the schooner *Laura Bevan* out of San Pedro for San Francisco. The small vessel was caught off Point Dume by a violent northwesterly blow, and wrecked with the loss of her crew and all twelve of her passengers. □

Note: *The lithograph on the next page and our cover painting for this issue are both from originals in the Honeyman Collection of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. This outstanding collection of early pictorial material relating to the West has been gathered over many years by Robert B. Honeyman, Jr., and now totals nearly two thousand items, including 61 oils, 206 water colors, 329 drawings, 835 lithographs, 176 engravings, 13 etchings, and 71 early photographs—as well as a great many manuscripts, maps, letter-sheets, advertising cards, stock certificates, and music sheets.*

THE GOLDEN GATE—ENTRANCE TO THE BAY OF SAN FRANCISCO.

SUNRISE

VIEW FROM OFF POINT LOBOS—LOOKING TOWARDS THE BAY—WITH THE STEAMSHIP JOHN L STEPHENS AND THE CLIPPER SHIP FLYING CLOUD JUST ENTERING THE GOLDEN GATE



THE TROUBLE WITH THE BULK OF WESTERN WRITING, Harvey Fergusson once observed, was that it was "sired by Sir Walter Scott and damned by the genteel tradition." In a considerable body of work, consisting of novels and cultural histories, Fergusson has set out to rectify the deficiencies in the literary record of the West that he sees so clearly; yet his work has not received the national or regional attention it deserves. In accounting for this neglect, we cannot simply resort to blaming the "eastern literary establishment." Fergusson has not received much support where he might have expected it: the literary circles of his own Southwest. Perhaps his sophisticated and quite ungenteel approach to his subject matter has run counter to some provincial tastes. Furthermore, having years ago abandoned his native New Mexico for California, he has not attended to the mutual back-scratching by which the close circle of southwestern writers have promoted each other's works. It is hoped that this article may contribute to a reopening of Fergusson's case and a rereading of his books by a West that may now be prepared to respond to his work.

Of course, the case should not be overstated. There is still, in all honesty, a literary lag in the West, despite the appearance of some remarkable writing. There is something of a mystery in the fact that the Southwest, for example, with its stimulating cross-cultural situation, has not yet produced literature of truly major importance. The American West has not yet equalled the performance of its Latin American counterpart, the Northeast of Brazil, where a very similar frontier and "cowboy" culture has existed. The modern *nordeste* novelists of Brazil have paced the literary development of their country, using situations and themes very similar to those employed by our western writers. The works of Euclides Da Cunha, Jorge Amado, Lins de Rego, Gracialano Ramos, and Joao Guimaraes Rosa have been translated into English, a number of them quite recently. They should be read with attention by the writers of the American West. Guimaraes Rosa, for example, in a work translated under the title *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*, has produced a "cowboy novel" of considerable subtlety, employing the "inscape" techniques of the literary advance guard. While it cannot be claimed for Harvey Fergusson that he commands a literary style of the intricacy and resourcefulness of Guimaraes Rosa, he does write a clear and virile prose, and displays a shrewd understanding of the macrocosm of social change and the microcosm of individual human motivation. Furthermore, he is capable of

a very sensitive rendering of the "feel of place" and can report, exactly and movingly, upon the natural phenomena of the West.

Born in 1890 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Harvey Fergusson has satisfied Allen Tate's prime requisite for the authentic regional writer: he is a native. The situation of his boyhood allowed him the freedom to develop his gifts. He was able to satisfy his need for solitary experience by taking long rides on horseback into what was then still a wilderness, often absenting himself from home for days. In early manhood he turned an attentiveness that had been sharpened by the minute observation of the processes of nature to the processes of human society. He came to understand that he lived in a region which was just completing an episode of traumatic change and in which the wounds were still fresh. In his autobiography *Home in the West*, he wrote: "The country as a whole was a living museum of its own history. . . . The history of my own region became as real to me as my own experience."

The press of the Southwest's tumultuous history crowding upon his own life imparted to his records of the region's past a flush of actuality. His novels are not "historical novels" in the Walter Scott tradition. They have a toughness and a kinesthetic quality that puts them more in the tradition of Dreiser's Chicago novels. Fergusson's characters are not, in truth, developed in depth as highly individualized personalities. However, legendary and somewhat mythic characters are very much in the tradition of American fiction. One does not expect to meet Captain Ahab in the neighborhood tavern. Yet the character-typing in Fergusson's novels is in the direction of intensification, and does not rob the figures in his landscape of the sense of reality.

A central theme in the novels is that of racial conflict, which provides the principal motif for a trilogy later assembled in one volume, *Followers of the Sun*. The novels in the trilogy are arranged chronologically by period rather than by date of publication. The first part of *Followers of the Sun* is the novel *Wolf Song*, which deals with the mountain men in New Mexico: the first Anglo-Americans to become acquainted with the region, and men who almost universally treated the Mexicans with a towering disdain. *In Those Days*, the second part, is a novel which, in covering the adult life of its central figure, Robert Jayson, pioneer trader and businessman, recounts the swift conquest of New Mexico by the Americans and the consequent destruction of the wealth and traditional way of life of the old Mexican landholding families of the Rio Grande Valley. The last part, *The Blood of the Conquerors* (actually the first written of the three novels), shows the old Mexican families of the Albuquerque region in full decay and in the final stage of what was to become an almost total dispossession. The protagonist of this novel, Ramon Delcasar, a young Mexican-American who is last in the line of a once proud and powerful family, attempts to reverse the tide and compete with the *gringos* on their own grounds. He is successful for a while. His motive in struggling against the fate that has overtaken his people is not the usual competitive profit urge of the gringo, but a desire to make himself acceptable to an Anglo-American girl. When the girl's family moves east in order to prevent her marriage with a Mexican, Ramon Delcasar loses the will to fight and quickly lapses into the apathetic condition of the rest of his people.

In presenting the character of Ramon Delcasar, Fergusson reveals his comprehension of the ambiguities of the relations between Mexicans and Anglo-Americans in the Southwest. As the following passage indicates, even the aristocratic Mexican families moved in a very uncertain social environment after the Anglo-Americans had established their ascendancy. Of Delcasar he writes:

> Whenever he felt sure of his social footing, his attitude toward women was bold and assured. But his social footing was a peculiarly uncertain thing for the reason that he was a Mexican. This meant that he faced in every social contact the possibility of a more or less covert prejudice against his blood, and that he faced it with an unduly proud and sensitive spirit concealed beneath a manner of aristocratic indifference. In the little Southwestern town where he had lived all his life . . . his social position was ostensibly the highest. He was spoken of as belonging to an old and prominent family. Yet he knew of mothers who carefully guarded their daughters from the peril of falling in love with him . . .

Fergusson pursues the subject of the fall of the old Mexican order in *Rio Grande* (1933), an authoritative and highly readable social and cultural history of the Rio Grande Valley. In two of his later novels, *Grant of Kingdom* (1950), and *The Conquest of Don Pedro* (1954), he deals with an intermediate era in which, in some cases, there were fruitful alliances between the Mexican aristocrats and the incoming Anglos.

In dealing with the racial situation in the Southwest and with other themes, Fergusson has revealed an interesting aspect of the social and cultural history of the re-

gion that has often been overlooked. Much of the drama of its social history in the second half of the nineteenth century is strikingly similar to more celebrated episodes in the history of the American South, the poignancy of which has provided the occasion for the work of some of the most gifted and interesting modern American writers. Like the South, the Southwest saw the destruction of a landed aristocracy, but with the added problem of differences of race and culture. The incoming gringo business entrepreneurs, before whose conniving ways the Mexican aristocrats were helpless, are roughly similar to the famous Snopse clan of Faulkner's trilogy.

There are also less obvious similarities. The relationship between the *patróns* of the great Mexican haciendas of the lower Rio Grande Valley and the poor Mexican landholders of the mountains of the Rio Arriba in northern New Mexico was very similar to the relationship between the great plantation owners of the southern seaboard and the poor white farmers of the back country. While the planter-aristocrats of the southern seaboard were generally Episcopalians, the mountain people of the South often belonged to "way-out" versions of Protestantism, characterized by evangelistic hysteria. In the Rio Grande Valley, the great patrons were orthodox Roman Catholics, while the mountain people of the Rio Arriba belonged to a flagellating sect called the *Penitentes*. In Fergusson's *Grant of Kingdom*, Daniel Laird, a wandering preacher originally from the mountain country of the South, escapes persecution at the hands of the supporters of a rich and usurping American entrepreneur by fleeing to the mountain strongholds of the Mexicans of the Rio Arriba. Despite his racial background, he is welcomed by the poor mountain Mexicans, who recognize that in important ways he is one of their own. Of the writers of the Southwest, Paul Horgan and Harvey Fergusson have been those with the technique and comprehension best suited to reveal the drama inherent in the social conflicts of the region.

In his attitudes toward the interacting social forces that produced the modern Southwest, Fergusson shows a characteristic complexity. He sympathizes with the underdog and takes a "progressive" view in social and political matters. Nevertheless, he is capable of considerable empathy with people and customs of which, in the purely rational aspect of his being, he does not approve. Commenting in the novel *Grant of Kingdom* upon an aristocratic Mexican woman, Fergusson writes: "I am no believer in the value of the aristocratic tradition, but generations of security and assured social status do give some men, and even more, some women, an almost perfect manner, and the Doña was a striking example of the fact." In the same novel, Fergusson gives his overt sympathies to the itinerant preacher, Daniel Laird, who ends his days as a radical member of the New Mexico State legislature and a fervent supporter of William Jennings Bryan and the Populists. But the legendary hero of the novel is Jean Ballard, an admittedly archaic type, who exercises an absolute though benevolent despotism over a large Spanish land grant that he has inherited from his Mexican father-in-law.

In fact, Fergusson's writing represents the paradox in the tradition of western literature that Henry Nash Smith has taken note of in *Virgin Land*. The solitary "romantic" figure, in love with the wilderness, avoiding towns or small communities as centers of contagion, is a type developed by Cooper and popularized by any number of western writers. As Smith points out, those who developed the legend of Daniel Boone saw him first in this romantic light. However, almost simultaneously, Boone was being publicized as the heroic advance guard of the forces of civilization, the agent who was to open paths in the wilderness to make way for the cities that were to stretch from coast to coast. The two images were contradictory, and the writers of the Boone legend were never able to resolve the conflict. Often, as Smith has shown us, writers have sided with one or the other vision of the West. Heroes generally have either been later versions of Natty Bumppo or fearless fighters for law and order. Fergusson, however, like the writers of the Boone legend, shows both strains in his work.

In his own way, Fergusson is a believer in manifest destiny, not as an ideal but as an inexorable process. In his novels, he frequently uses the word "destiny," but the stories he tells amount to a wry view of that concept. His most memorable characters, in fact, are figures who, combining elements of the old order and the new, momentarily arrest the forces of "destiny" and make a legend for themselves. The respective protagonists of *Grant of Kingdom* and *The Conquest of Don Pedro*, Jean Ballard and Leo Mendes, are solitary figures—loners. Leo Mendes represents the figure of the Jew as western pioneer. He had left New York to begin life again as a traveling peddler in New Mexico, in the years before the railroad reached Santa Fe. In the small community of San Pedro he established a store, to the great displeasure of the local

Continued on page 67

Soiled Doves & Ornamental Culture

Kansas Cowtown Entertainments

BY RONALD L. DAVIS

NOT SURPRISINGLY, HISTORIANS AND PULP WRITERS ALIKE over the years have been inclined to give most of their attention to the red lights and violence of the West, a study in freewheeling vice and sudden death. There is drama, after all, in a shoot-out, and pathos and a moral in the wages of sin. Yet the social patterns of the West provide a study in contrasts, for the frontier harbored a striking ambivalence between gross barbarism on the one hand and an equally endemic yearning after refinement and respectability on the other. In no other region was this more apparent than on the Plains, where Kansas cowtowns flourished in a welter of respectability *versus* moral anarchy.

The shipping points of Abilene, Ellsworth, Newton, Wichita, and Dodge City had their share of violence, as chronicled in song, story, and bad television entertainments, but each also held a sizeable community of solid citizens, moral to the point of prudery. Moreover, each was not one town but several, depending upon the season, hour, and section. The Abilene of the winter months, for example, was a far cry from that of summer, when the drovers made their way up from Texas. Even then, it was different in the daylight hours than at night; during the day, most of the high-spirited cowboys were either working too hard or were too hungover to do much carousing.

More significantly, in nearly every cowtown there was an effort to separate the rowdy element of the popula-

tion from the genteel, to isolate the vagrant ruffians from the regular citizenry. In Abilene the railroad divided the town into two sections. On the north side lived the respectable people, most of them literate, religious, hard-working businessmen. To the south was the raucous element, with its saloons, gambling dens, dance halls, and hotels of dubious repute. This southern side was where the cowboys congregated, and Texas Street just south of the tracks was a "glowing thoroughfare which led from the dreariness of the open prairies straight into the delight of Hell itself."

Abilene's early red-light district was scattered along the Texas Street vicinity. Every afternoon and evening the dust-clogged street was crowded with cowboys, cattlemen, and a few local farmers and shopkeepers. About four o'clock business practically stopped as the streetwalkers, got up in ruffles and rouge, came out to parade along the boardwalks, moving in groups of two to six.

In time, as the established citizenry became more vocal in its opposition, the prostitutes migrated to a shanty-town district along the banks of Mud Creek outside the city, pretty well beyond any effective legal jurisdiction. Since neither the girls nor their clients enjoyed police protection there, the "vice problem" grew as Abilene's cattle trade increased. Brawling and occasional shootings became a routine sideshow of the primary sport. As the situation became chronic, a plan was worked out to bring the lively ladies back into the city—under local police jurisdiction. The city fathers designated a section just inside the city limits, southeast of downtown, for the building of a red-light district surrounded by a stockade. Inside, a dozen or more large, barracks-like houses of prostitution, gambling halls, and saloons were erected. The madams were instructed to keep their girls inside this village except for occasional and respectable shopping trips. Each house paid a substantial license fee to city officials, which assured a degree of police protection. Hacks ran regular shuttle service from the main part of the city out to the vice district, but for the most part, the genteel townspeople simply looked the other way and ignored what went on down in the red-light section.

Like Abilene, Dodge City had two distinct populations, and again the railroad track marked the dividing line between respectability and depravity. In the early days, the area south of the Santa Fe tracks was wide open. Dance halls and saloons abounded, and behind them rows of two-room cabins were thrown up for prostitution. In this section the cowboys could do pretty much as they pleased, but when they crossed over the tracks, they were required to take off their guns and leave them in one of several designated places. Those who violated this ordinance generally spent the night in jail. By the spring of 1877, the northern side of town had been refurbished with an eye toward elegance and a cultured existence. The Dodge House boasted fifty rooms, and its dining room offered a menu of assorted delicacies and imported wine and liquors. Even the saloons, particularly the Long Branch, took on an aura of refinement that contrasted sharply with the crudeness of the other side of the tracks. "Chalk" Beeson, a talented musician who took over the Long Branch in 1876, determined to make his establishment a center of culture. To provide his customers with high-toned music, Beeson and his associate Roy Drake, hired Harry Adams, an itinerant musician, and a "Professor" Miller, and formed a four-piece orchestra to play at the Long Branch.

Clashes between residents and the visiting Texans were sharp and frequent, as citizens' committees attempted to preserve order and morality over the Texas section. Although Dodge was not willing to terminate the cattle business as the more easterly shipping points had done, by the summer of 1878 its citizenry was bent upon keeping the lawless element under control. A vigorous campaign was therefore launched to import certain activities characteristic of stable, refined communities to combat the boorishness across the tracks. To begin with, a German instructor of philosophy was brought to town; he advertised for pupils, offering to give an hour's lesson daily in any one of four languages—French, German, Latin, or Greek—for only $1.50 a month. A recently organized volunteer fire department purchased a new Brussels carpet for its meeting place, which also functioned as a public library and reading room, and residents were asked to donate books. On June 29, musical instruments arrived for the newly-formed "Cowboy Band," which eventually was to tour the United States.

The wildness of the typical cowtown, then, was largely restricted to the south side of the tracks, and existed there chiefly during the nights of the summer months. Even during the height of the cowboy season, however, violence was probably not quite as rampant as many chroniclers have claimed. Henry Jameson states in *Heroes by the Dozen* that during the five-year heyday of Abilene, only about twenty or twenty-five men were

In contrast to the celebrants in the woodcut on page 19, the dancers in the distant reaches of Dodge City's "Varieties" dance hall show all the gay abandon of poll-watchers at sundown. Perhaps the presence of the camera subdued them; perhaps it was a slow month in 1878.

known to have been killed, although the author admits that some of the worst of the roughnecks may not have been considered worth counting. Even the toughest cowboys seem to have assumed a chivalrous attitude in the presence of women, and the wives and daughters of local Kansas citizens apparently could walk the streets unmolested. Jameson insists that throughout the history of early Abilene there is no evidence that a respectable woman was ever attacked.

Dissipation was another matter; the cowboys indulged in practically every variety. In the early seventies, Abilene had more saloons and gambling halls than stores—twenty in a single block along Texas Street. The local 1871 census showed thirty-two establishments selling liquor, sixty-four gambling tables, and 130 known professional gamblers. In Newton during its zenith as a cowtown, nearly every second building in the business section featured a bar.

The earliest saloons in Kansas were crude—often tents, dugouts, or mere shacks built of logs or rough boarding. Barrels frequently served as tables, and the bar was simply a plank laid across two beer kegs. As the boom towns became prosperous, the saloons grew more imposing, with such furnishings as tables, chairs, kerosene chandeliers, and oak or mahogany bars with mirrors behind. The mirror was not just an extension of the saloonkeeper's pride; it served the purpose of protecting the customer from being shot in the back while taking

Trail's end, 1879: Dodge City's Front Street—no lush Babylon, but a tired drover still could purchase any one of a variety of delights. And after two months of trailing summer herds, a man was not inclined to be picky.

a drink. Places patronized by the Texans kept guns within easy reach. The bar entrance invariably sported a swinging door, which was never locked and served as a screen to conceal patrons from the outside. Most of the saloons in the Texas sections were dirty, usually rank with the stench of liquor, straw, horses, kerosene, and tobacco juice. Not infrequently, paintings of nude women hung on the plank walls, and in the case of the Bull's Head Saloon in Abilene, the proprietor shocked a number of people by putting up a life-sized, four-color portrait of a bull with certain exaggerated features.

Saloons and dance halls were often given Texas names, such as the "Lone Star Dance Hall" in Dodge and the "Alamo Saloon" in Abilene. Using the proprietor's name or nickname was also common—for example, "Rowdy Joe's" and "Old Red's Place" in Wichita. Saloon names were consistently short but descriptive. A spirit of democracy pervaded these establishments. Men of different social positions, who frequently shunned one another on the streets, not only mingled at the bar but exchanged stories, bought one another drinks, and occasionally even blended voices in song.

Whiskey was the principal drink, not all of it "rot-gut." In a number of saloons, fine liqueurs, brandies, and mixed drinks could be purchased. Beer, because of its bulk and high transportation cost, was expensive in the early days and did not become popular until later. When it did become common, ice was usually available to keep it cold. Some particularly accommodating saloons offered special mixtures, put up in small bottles labeled "MEDICINE," for devout church members who were reluctant to do their tippling in public.

The bartender played a significant role in the success of any saloon, and often the owner himself worked the bar. He needed to be a good talker, and had to be strong enough to break up brawls. Although most bartenders were staunch individualists, they usually dressed in a "uniform" that consisted of a white apron, white shirt with unrolled sleeves and garters above the elbow, a black bow tie, and—when the man was really successful—a diamond stud. A mustache, long sideburns, and a spit-curl on the forehead were also considered essentials. One of Wichita's more colorful saloon keepers was Joseph Lower—called "Rowdy Joe" because of his rough manner of handling unruly customers. Joe was a short, stocky fellow, whose wife ("Rowdy Kate") was said to have been able to drink more whiskey and shoot quicker than most of the men in town. Kate reportedly had shot and killed five men in her day, two of them former husbands. She was an attractive woman and, like her husband, dressed in the latest style.

Almost from the start, gambling was associated with the saloon, although there were separate gambling dens and some saloons where no gambling was done. In Newton, for instance, of the twenty-seven places where liq-

uor was sold, only eight offered gambling. Gaming equipment was scarce, chuck-a-luck tumblers, faro boxes, and an occasional roulette wheel making up most of it. Stakes sometimes ran high. One cattleman in Abilene was reported to have lost $30,000 in a single sitting.

Most of the saloons provided some kind of music—a piano player, a singer, a fiddler, or sometimes just a music box. By the 1870's the saloons in the larger towns had dance floors. Describing the cowboy's dancing, Joseph McCoy wrote, "He plunges in and hoes it down at a terrible rate in the most approved yet awkward country style, often swinging his partner clear off the floor." In a few of the larger establishments, where patronage warranted it, there was staged entertainment offered now and then. Here, the program consisted of sentimental ballads, an occasional risqué song, and comic routines, but rarely the "high kick" dance performed by those beautiful, bare-legged girls pictured by popular fiction and the movies.

No barmaids worked in Kansas saloons, and most of the cowtown saloons used no girls at all. Now and then prostitutes were given soliciting privileges; and in the more elaborate establishments, particularly those with gambling, "hostesses" were employed to inveigle customers into drinking, dancing, and gaming their money away. Generally, there were two types of girls—one catering to the rich men, the other to the cowboy trade.

During the summer months, professional prostitutes made up a noteworthy portion of the cowtown population. In Wichita in 1874, the last big trail year there, the records indicate the presence of about fifty prostitutes. By September of each year, the number declined, remaining relatively low during the off season. Well remembered are such notorious Kansas prostitutes as "Big Nose Kate" Elder, but there was a host of now nameless girls, known collectively as "nymphs du prairie," "soiled doves," and "painted cats." From time to time, portable brothels—"cat wagons," as they were called—appeared, giving local authorities no end of headaches.

Shooting and fighting often took place in the brothels and dance halls. In fact, wherever there were women,

The Dodge City Cowboy Band of 1884. Cultural refinement in the Kansas cowtowns was largely a matter of opinion, and vigorous performance counted for a good deal.

the tendency toward violence increased. The saloons saw their share of rowdiness, too, much of it relatively harmless. It was not unusual for an inebriated cowboy to ride his steed into a saloon, with pistol blazing, but seldom was anyone wounded in such pranks. One venturous cowboy in Abilene even rode into the town barbershop with his six-gun drawn and forced the barber to stand on a high chair and give him a haircut and shave while he sat on his horse.

Although somewhat harrowing, such behavior was tolerated in the Texas quarter of town. Across the tracks, in the northern section, similar antics would have been condemned in no uncertain terms. Here, the established citizens sought to carve out of the Kansas plains a home fit for women and children. Dreaming of a better way of life, the permanent residents of the cowtowns self-consciously surrounded themselves with the trappings of civilization. Most of them had brought a few books along from the East, and many subscribed to eastern newspapers and magazines. When they could afford it, they imported pianos, for a piano from beyond the Missouri was considered a mark of true gentility. As Alice Marriott says in *This Is the West*, a piano "was a symbol; a symbol of the East, of home, of civilization, of religion and good manners and three meals a day, and of almost-forgotten comforts."

Another coveted sign of permanence and respectability was the theater, and in their search for dignity and elegance, the Kansas cowtowns built theaters enthusiastically, if a little crudely. The typical prairie theater of the seventies (many were called "opera houses," since the term seemed more refined) was located on the second floor of a two-story frame structure, over a meat market or some other commercial establishment. Wichita's first theater was a long room located above Lewellen's Grocery, at the north end of Main Street. The audience sat on kitchen chairs placed in rows. The performer's platform was illuminated by kerosene lamps and furnished with a black curtain. In order to change costumes, the performers were forced to walk through the audience to a small room at the back of the hall. Although these early playhouses varied considerably in size and design, most of them accommodated between six hundred and nine hundred persons. By the eighties, the larger cowtowns boasted three- and four-story structures complete with galleries and stages.

The greatest hazard to the early cowtown theaters was fire. Since most towns had no fire departments, they had to rely on the frequently ineffective bucket brigade. A number of theaters were entirely destroyed soon after they were built, inspiring prohibitive insurance rates. By the eighties, however, most theaters were built of brick, and when the Abilene Opera House was erected in 1880, its third story contained a 1,000-barrel water tank.

Conservative preachers who found the theaters morally objectionable sometimes insisted that fire was a manifestation of God's wrath. As late as 1907, one Abilene churchman told his congregation, "This unholy thing we call the stage has slipped down the line until degeneration is writ on every room, and chair, and scene." Obviously, a certain conflict existed between the rigid moral views of many Kansans and their longing for the cultural prestige represented by the theater, an intensified example of the general struggle between the Protestant Ethic and the desire for conspicuous elegance present in the whole country during the nineteenth century.

Since the cowtown citizenry did view the theater as a symbol of refinement, caution was taken to ensure that dramatic offerings were morally respectable and that audiences behaved discreetly. When a variety hall on North Main in Wichita exhibited a rough burlesque troupe in 1879, the proprietor was forced by an irate citizens' committee to abandon his enterprise. Another theater, on Douglas Avenue—a rather elegant one, with fine upholstered chairs—fell into disrepute when a man was shot there one night. So long as the theatrical scene remained quiet and free from scandal, the religious community generally accepted and even supported it. With the first hint of tainted publicity, local churchmen rose to denounce the theater with venom.

Many of the early theatrical performances in the cowtowns were given by amateurs. In January, 1880, a group of Wichita amateurs put on a play called *The Union Spy* and made quite a success of it. The production ran for twenty-seven nights, with receipts on the last evening of $1,000—a rather remarkable showing, since the population of Wichita at this time was only about 3,000. The play was then taken "on the road" and presented to neighboring towns. Sometimes plays were written by local talent. One enthusiastic young Wichita woman wrote a monumental saga called *Homesteading in Oklahoma*. Its first performance began at 8 P.M.; by 2 A.M., the orchestra had deserted the actors; and legend has it that the final curtain did not fall until nearly eight o'clock the next morning.

Chalkley Beeson, Kansas cowtown impresario and owner of the famous Long Branch Saloon.

The tragedies of Shakespeare were considered the most elevated dramatic offerings possible, and were given frequent productions, particularly after professional troupes began adding Kansas to their circuits. Shakespearean drama was approached with heavy-handed sincerity by the Kansans, and from time to time, a Texas cowboy would come over to acquire a little culture. On one occasion the curtain was forced down on the sleepwalking scene from *Macbeth* when a cowboy in the audience put up a commotion. Asked about it later, he explained his reasons: "She had her shimmy on."

Contemporary sentimental dramas like *East Lynne*, *Sea of Ice*, and *Under the Gaslight*, although considered less lofty than Shakespeare, were nevertheless popular. Melodramas of the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* variety appeared frequently. At Old Eagle Hall in Wichita, a particularly melodramatic climax almost saw the villain shot by an enthusiastic and highly inebriated cowboy. As was customary during the nineteenth century, vaudeville routines were presented between acts of serious dramas, and performances almost always closed with a comic afterpiece.

Opera, generally of the lighter vein, was given occasionally, but "Grand" opera, although considered even more elevating than Shakespeare, was a rarity in the Kansas cowtowns. While Abilene might have its "Opera House Livery Stable" and Dodge its "Opera House Saloon," the lyric art itself remained largely a stranger, an unattainable symbol of a more civilized way of life, a vain hope for the future. *The Dodge City Times* of July 14, 1877, reports a production of *Martha*, given by the Richings-Bernard Company, but such an offering was the exception and not the rule. Cowtown audiences were much more likely to find minstrel shows, ventriloquists, magicians, variety acts, and circuses performing on local opera house stages.

Still, an interest in serious music existed, superficial though it may have been. Perhaps it was an impulse toward "conspicuous culture" that prompted the *Dickinson County Chronicle* (of Abilene) to reprint in 1876 a New York *Tribune* article on Wagner at Bayreuth and the *Ford County Globe* (of Dodge), three years later, to include a long article by a local citizen who had heard a Rubenstein concert in New York. Musical events at home were generally supported with enthusiasm, if not always with deep understanding. Reviewing a concert by Madame Camilla Urso, a violinist, the *Ford County Globe* of March 11, 1879, said, "Her playing is, of course, beyond criticism. Her execution is wonderful, but above and beyond that is her power of drawing from the instrument genuine music—music which touches the heart and stirs the emotions." Serious music to these pioneers seems to have been a cultural hypodermic, immunizing them against the barbarism of their surroundings.

Drama was approached in a more relaxed, less stilted manner. Even Shakespeare apparently was genuinely enjoyed, although the Bard's plays were normally given melodramatic interpretations in condensed versions. Theatrical companies were not particularly plentiful in the early days, but some played the Kansas circuit season after season, with the effect that their principals came to be looked upon almost as members of the community.

One of the most familiar troupes to play the cowtowns was the Lord Dramatic Company, which first appeared in Kansas during the winter of 1869-70 and returned off and on for the better part of twenty years. James A. Lord was both the company's manager and one of its actors.

Continued on page 69

OUT WEST *in a Palace Car*

BY RICHARD REINHARDT

HEREWITH, two versions of the delights of railroad travel west -one from the bygone era of napkin rings, one from the age of Vend-O Mat. "Thirty three Hundred Miles in a Pullman Hotel Car" is a first hand report of one segment of a lush and well publicized journey undertaken by the proprietor of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* in 1877. "The Creme of the Automatic Buffet" is provided by Richard Reinhardt, who stealthily duplicated the Leslie trip in 1967. Complete side-by-side accounts of both journeys have been assembled by Reinhardt in *Out West on the Overland Train*, an American West book published in October.

Recently, on a trip from Elko to Reno, Nevada, our editor fell afoul of the same dining car exposed in "The Creme of the Automatic Buffet." In the interests of accuracy and Fair Play, he wishes to report that the missing can opener has since been replaced. *Sic transit botulism.*

1877: THIRTY-THREE HUNDRED MILES IN A PULLMAN HOTEL CAR

IT SOUNDS APPALLING. Still more appalling were the accounts of friends who had gone before us, following the setting sun at twenty miles an hour.

"You will be worn out with fatigue You will be cramped and stiff with the confinement. You will turn blacker than the Ethiop with tan and cinders and be rasped like a nutmeg grater with alkali dust. You can never sleep a wink for the jarring and noise of the train, and never will be able to dress and undress and bathe yourselves like Christians. Above all, your nearest and dearest, under the influence of the fatigue and the monotony and the discomfort, will be ready to turn and rend you before you get down into the Sacramento Valley—and *you* will desire nothing better than to make a burnt offering of them and everyone else insane enough to shut himself up seven days and nights in a railway car!"

"Scenery?" I venture to suggest.

"Oh, the scenery is grand at the end of the route -Echo and Weber Canyons, of course, and the Wasatches. But the plains! So dry and brown and monotonous—you'll hate the sight of them before you're twelve hours out from Omaha!"

This was the sketch held up to us. What is the reality? Look through *my* glasses—not *coleur de rose,* I assure you—and take twenty-four hours on the Pullman hotel car as a fair

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1967: THE CREME OF THE AUTOMATIC BUFFET

AT OGDEN THE PASSENGER CARS for San Francisco are severed from the Union Pacific dining car, with its dome of tinted glass, its pink tablecloths, and its vases of fresh flowers. Union Pacific turns southward, taking with it the portion of the train designated "City of Los Angeles," and Southern Pacific takes command of the "City of San Francisco," the over land route.

In place of the departed dome car, we are provided with a Coffee Shop Lounge, which resembles a lunch counter in the financial district on Saturday afternoon. Supplementing this, one car forward, is a fairly recent refinement in railroad catering called the Automatic Buffet, to which every traveler is expressly invited by a printed notice left on the seat of his roomette, along with two coat hangers, three clean towels, and a supply of paper cups.

"Over the past few years," the invitation says, "budget - minded SP travelers have found that snacks and light meals in the Automatic Buffet Car help ease the costs of travel—and children find it fun."

This exactly confirmed what we had been told by a budget-minded traveler of our acquaintance who once ate lunch in the Automatic Buffet on the Southern Pacific "Lark," between San Francisco and Los Angeles. Her children, she said, had found it fun.

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MR. PULLMAN EXPLAINING THE PAPER WHEELS.

sample of the rest.

Peep in at us by lamplight, when Howells is majestically working his way between the berths, making them up in strict rotation, regardless of the prayers of sleepy wretches whose numbers come last on his list.

Howells is a severe autocrat who patronizes the women and condescends to be playful with the men. His daily life is passed in struggles to suppress our light baggage and keep track of lost penknives, sketchbooks, gloves, and purses. Berth after berth is spread with fresh, clean sheets and heavy rugs, piled with little square pillows, and duly shut in with voluminous curtains; while under each are stowed the occupant's belongings—the satchel, the half-cut magazine that is never read, the portfolio and sketchbooks, a pair of slippers, or a whiskbroom

We are divided by a curtain across the aisle: four women, each rejoicing in "a whole section all to herself," at one end; and at the other, the turbulent masculine element, "doubled up," so to speak, in upper and lower berths and making night gleeful in their own peculiar fashion.

And do you sleep? The springy roll of the cars, the slight monotonous rocking of your easy, roomy bed, and the steady roar and rattle of the train lull you into dreamland as a child is rocked by his nurse's lullaby. There is a little struggle with sleep at first, for the mysterious moonlit country is so full of fascination. A dark shape slides

1877

1967

PREPARING THE DESSERT.

The Automatic Buffet of the "City of San Francisco" turned out to be a railroad car of standard size, rather murkily lighted and painted a neutral beige throughout. At either end were eight tables, topped with gray Formica, and at the center was a long row of vending machines on both sides of the aisle. The only decorative touches on the pristine expanse of enameled metal were two large representations of Automatic Buffet full-course dinners, done in warm colors: the roast turkey dinner with stuffing, buttered peas, and sweet potatoes ($1.25), and the barbecued chicken dinner in a four-compartment aluminum tray (also $1.25 but not served on this car). These brilliant photolithographs, which invited comparison with the finest work of Andy Warhol, were obviously masterpieces *sui generis*, strikingly appropriate to the Early Factory Lunchroom decor, and their visual impact was accentuated by the solitary prominence of their position.

I immediately sensed a mute efficiency about the vending machines that contrasted favorably with the independent disposition of the waiters in the Coffee Shop Lounge. The only sound was an occasional low grumbling when one of the machines would respond to some internal, thermostatic urging and turn its compressor on or off. With the vast, dark desert slipping past the windows, the dim light gleaming on the Coca-Cola signs, and the gentle purring of

swift and shadowy across the picture, vanishing with great flying leaps. It may be a prairie wolf, a coyote, or a mountain lion. Another faintly outlined shadow points a motionless cone up to the stars. It is a Shoshone tepee, the moonlight falling on its smoke-stained, ragged skins and the ashes of its smoldering fire. Your eyes shut lazily and forget to open again But they shut in a picture of those melancholy, awful wastes that will be a part of you henceforward.

Then the waking—perhaps with a flash of new-risen sunshine across your pillows, or only the first scarlet streak of dawn above the tawny divides. You draw the blankets and rugs closer round your shoulders, for it is chilly, and, pushing the pillows higher, you lie staring out for the next hour or two upon the shifting wonder of the Great Plains. There is no sign of life among the other sleepers; nothing stirring but Howells, who will presently pull open the curtains of the berth with a bland, "Wake up—open your eyes, lady!"

And then the womanly soul gives itself up to one great problem—how to dive into the washroom with the greatest expedition, eluding other candidates and locking them out in triumph.

If you step out on the back platform, you can investigate the process of breakfast and have a chat with the cook. Our car is the last of the train, and its tiny kitchen opens on

Continued overleaf, top

THE WINE-CLOSET

wheels underfoot, the buffet evoked some of the cosmic awe one feels in a great hydroelectric powerhouse late at night, when the dynamos are throbbing tirelessly and a solitary engineer sits near the control panel, reading a comic book and eating a Milky Way.

Silently, I wandered up and down on the rubber matting between the rows of machines, pricing the ice cream bars (vanilla, fudge, or creamsicle, 15¢), the cold drinks with crushed ice (orange-pineapple, carbonated or noncarbonated, Coca-Cola, or Lemon Hi, 15¢), and the sandwiches (ham, 75¢, cheese, 60¢, bread, butter, and jelly, 30¢). Next to the dispensary of "hot casserole dishes" (or canned goods, as they often are called), I found a cunningly designed Self Service Counter stocked with paper plates, paper napkins, paper straws, plastic knives, forks, and spoons, paper envelopes of salt, pepper, and sugar, and plastic ampules of syrup, catsup, and mustard.

I decided, perhaps rashly, to begin dinner with a plastic bowl of Campbell's Tomato Soup (35¢). This choice necessitated a search for change. I had only two quarters; but I woke up an accommodating porter two cars back who was willing to give me two dimes for one of my quarters. Returning to the Automatic Buffet, I inserted a quarter and a dime in the soup machine and was promptly delivered an 8½-ounce can, hot to the touch. At

Continued overleaf, center

MAKING UP THE BERTHS

THE COOK IN HIS WELL-EQUIPPED KITCHEN AT THE REAR OF THE CAR

the platform, the steps of which are guarded by strong iron gates. In the tiny cupboard adjoining, where the caterer reigns supreme, is an incredible store of potted meats and vegetables, preserves and fruit, and close-packed dainties of all sorts. The portly chef almost fills up his small quarters and risks knocking down an army of saucepans at every turn of his elbow; but he moves deftly and beams upon us over his little stove while he turns the beefsteaks and stirs the mushroom sauce.

At nine o'clock Howells fastens the little tables in place, lays the white cloths and napkins, and we slip into our places. Breakfast comes by dainty courses: fish, fresh-caught at the last station on our way; beefsteak and

1877

1967

this point I discovered that there was no can opener in the Self Service Counter, although you could see a bracket on the wall to accommodate a crank-type opener. A brakeman who came by gave an opinion that the can opener had been stolen.

"Everything gets stolen in time," he said enigmatically.

For a minute or two I stood there, tossing the hot can back and forth between my hands. Finally I remembered that I had a beer can opener in my suitcase. I wrapped an edge of my jacket like an insulating pad around the can, carried it back four cars to my roomette, and set it on the lid of the toilet while I got my suitcase from under the seat and searched for the beer opener under several layers of

champignons; hot rolls and cornbread; broiled chicken on toast; and potatoes stewed in cream or fried Saratoga fashion, with the best of coffee and tea, or a glass of milk, half cream. You eat with an appetite unknown east of Missouri, and meanwhile your eyes are drinking in their fill of the great, solid sea of the plains, new-bathed in morning sunshine.

Breakfast is scarcely over before you rush to the platform to see some wonderful line of buttes, or look for antelopes, or watch a slow emigrant train winding past; or else, in a fit of sudden industry, you spread your little table with sketchbook and pencils and work out, as much as the almost imperceptible jar of the car will let you, the last group of Indians sketched at Elko or Evanston.

The party scatters into groups, twos and threes, as parties inevitably will. Somebody scribbles notes in a tiny book; another hurries off a file of postal cards to drop at the next station. Lady Bountiful opens her workbox to darn a rent in a flounce or a coat sleeve; and Madame brings out her French *brochure* to read, when anyone will let her.

At the further end of the car, in the gentlemen's quarters, the tiny smoking room has always a tenant or two; and so we drift our several ways and dream or work away the miles until the sun is high overhead and Howells announces luncheon.

Our little table is set this time with

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TAKING IN WATER FOR THE KITCHEN.

dirty shirts and underwear. The opener eventually proved to be in a bag of pretzels on the hat rack above the mirror, but the soup stayed appetizingly warm throughout my ten-minute search. I poured it into a little wax paper porringer, printed to simulate a wooden tub (which I went back and got from the Self Service Counter), and I ate it with a pink plastic spoon. The soup needed a little salt, which I had forgotten; but I felt I could make up for the lack of seasoning on the next course.

By the time I got back to the Automatic Buffet again, an attendant in a white jacket had come on duty, and he fussed paternally over the next steps of my meal—offering me change, showing me where to find the little vials of syrup and mustard and packets of salt, pointing out the napkin holders and the drinking fountain. There also were some other customers—three men and a blonde girl in ski clothes and deerskin boots—who were playing cards at one of the tables and drinking Lemon Hi (15¢) from plastic cups. They openly stared at me as if they had never seen a budget-minded traveler eating in the Automatic Buffet.

I had intended to move on to a macaroni and cheese course (95¢) or one of the hot casserole dishes—say, Silver Skillet Beans with Sliced Franks (50¢) or Nalley's Enchiladas with Meat in Sauce (50¢). The lack of a can opener ruled this out. (The

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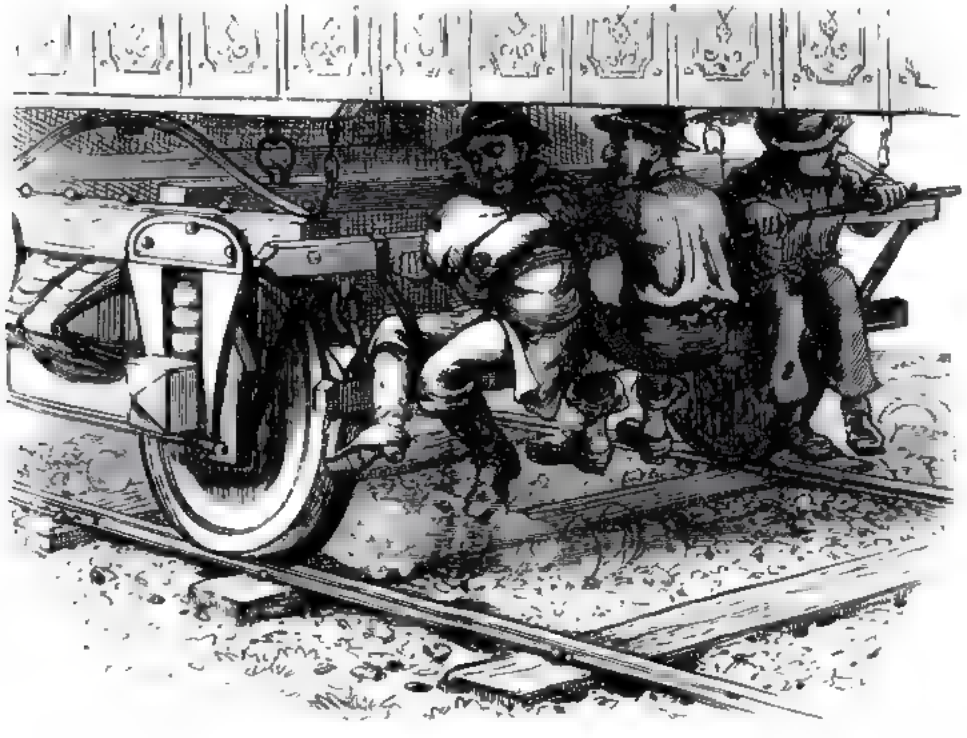
"MUST STEP SOMEWHERE."

PERFORMING THE MORNING ABLUTIONS.



TRAMPS RIDING ON THE RAILS.

sandwiches and a salad, or some biscuits and a dish of fruit, never very long ignored, though everyone declares that he is "not the least bit hungry." An hour afterward, perhaps, the train stops for dinner and twenty minutes at the wayside station; we rush for our hats and the blessed opportunity of a "constitutional" on the platform while the rest of the hungry passengers besiege the dining room.

The afternoon is never a minute too long. If it should be, there is the couch in the middle section, with its bright rugs and fresh pillows. We see freaks of architecture among the ochery-red buttes; we slide through miles of prairie dog villages, alive with frisky little tenants; we throw silver "bits" and handfuls of crackers

1877

1967

attendant also thought it had been stolen.) I chose instead a salad course of fruit Jello (30¢). Somehow, I punched the wrong button and got macaroni salad, which was in the tier immediately below the Jello; but I really didn't object to the substitution. Both salads were the same price, and they looked as if they tasted quite a bit alike, anyway.

My doting attendant insisted that I permit him to insert the coins ($1.25) and carry to the Self Service Counter the *pièce de résistance*—sliced beef dinner, boiled potatoes, buttered corn. It was served in a divided aluminum platter of a convenient rectangular shape that emerged, fully cooked and well heated, from a glass compartment marked "Lift the Door

and cakes to painted squaws, reaching up greedy hands at every station; we whistle herds of cattle off the track, and the sportsmen impotently pop their pistols at fleet-limbed antelopes skimming by like shadows; and never for one second do we grow tired of it all.

Now the afternoon light is getting low, and Howells and the little tables come on the scene again. We sip our oyster soup, discuss turkey and antelope steaks and quail, and trifle with ice cream and *café noir*. When the wild cloudy masses in the west are flushed and hot with the sunset's last fires, we take our places on the platform again and keep them until the stars are out and the moon is high above the snow peaks of the Rockies.

Inside, the lamps are lit and swinging overhead. Between the windows, the looking glasses are slid up on their panels, and a candle behind each burns in a bright reflector. You will join the group at cards yonder, and I shall order a table laid for me at the farthest end, away from the clatter and laughter and fun, and shall scribble a half-dozen letters to tell the friends at home how I have gained five pounds already, how I am burnt brown as an Indian by the western sun and wind, and how the rarest and richest of all my journeyings is this three thousand miles by rail. □

When Package Is in View."

While the attendant and my fellow passengers looked on approvingly, I tore off the foil topping, seasoned the beef with a packet of salt and a plastic pannikin of catsup, and carried the whole steaming trencher to a table directly under the photographic view of the roast turkey dinner steaming seductively in its gravy. The attendant offered to bring me coffee, but I was not again to be denied my direct encounter with the vending machine. The coffee machine offered four choices: black, sugar only, creme only, or creme and sugar. (I do not know precisely what "creme" is, but I think it is not produced, or only partly produced, by cows.)

After wavering between Stempel's Cake Doughnuts (25¢) and Raisin Pound Cake (25¢), I decided for a piece of berry pie (35¢) that was displayed in a transparent, wedge-shaped box just a few shelves below the fruit Jello. I was careful not to get macaroni salad again, although I *had* enjoyed it. With the pie, of course, I had a paper cup of coffee (15¢), creme only.

For just $2.40, plus tip (35¢), I had had a truly memorable, budget-minded, light meal. Whatever it may have lacked in graceful cuisinage could have been remedied, I am sure, by the addition of a small bottle of dry, red burgundy. I undoubtedly could have bought this in the Coffee Shop Lounge, one car back, if only I had thought of it in time. □

N° 10 Religion et superstition

RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION

Vignettes of a Wilderness Mission

BY NICOLAS POINT, S.J.

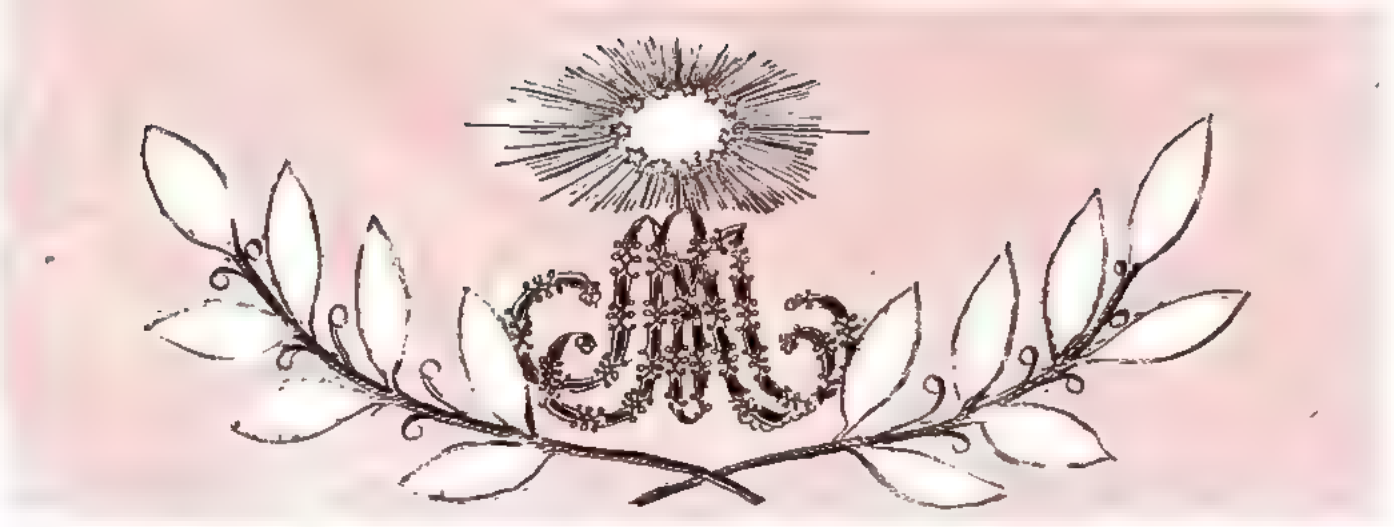
Translated by Joseph P. Donnelly, S.J.

On April 30, 1841, Father Pierre Jean De Smet and five Jesuit companions left Westport, Missouri, as members of an overland party led by John Bidwell and Thomas Fitzpatrick. Among the missionaries was Father Nicolas Point, who was to spend six years working with Father De Smet among the Flathead, Coeur d'Alene, and Blackfeet Indians.

An amateur painter of outstanding ability, Father Point used his artistic talents to communicate the tenets of Christianity to the Indians as well as to record the adventures and day-to-day life of his mission. His health suffered severely from the rigors of Rocky Mountain life, and from 1847 onwards he was transferred to successively less arduous posts. It was at the Jesuit novitiate near Montreal in the years 1859-1865 that he organized his rough journals into six beautifully illustrated volumes that he titled "Recollections of the Rocky Mountains."

After Father Point's death in 1868, the journals came to rest in the archives of the Collège Sainte-Marie in Montreal. In 1940, Joseph P. Donnelly, S. J., saw the volumes, with their scores of lively paintings, and for over twenty years he sought the means to publish them. At last Father Donnelly's perseverance has borne fruit, and this fall his translation of the journals, illustrated with over two hundred of the paintings, has been published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston as Wilderness Kingdom—Indian Life in the Rocky Mountains: 1840-1847. *The text and paintings on the following pages are from this book, as are the paintings of the buffalo hunt on pages 6, 7, 10, and 11.*

(Left) *Entitled "Religion and Superstition," this painting from Father Point's journal is an attempt by an Indian boy to picture an abstract idea.* (Above) *Two astonished Indians view a painting of Christ crowned with thorns, in Father Point's chapel at Westport.*



These pages concerning the Indians are limited to only three tribes, for the author, during his many years among them, knew those three best. Among the Blackfeet and the Coeur d'Alenes there are many who are in no way inferior to the generally superior Flatheads. However, it would undoubtedly be correct to maintain that among the Flatheads one rather usually finds the virtues of modesty, frankness, courage, goodness, and generosity. On the contrary, the Coeur d'Alenes are noted for dissimulation, egotism, and cruelty. The Blackfeet are notorious for being bloodthirsty and are well known for their pillaging. These are the principal traits which have earned for the Flatheads the appellation of "the nation of chiefs," and for the others the opprobrious names still applied to them. Common to all three, with some exceptions among the Flatheads, is an unrelenting spirit of independence, laziness, a passion for gambling, cruelty to the vanquished, very little regard for women, forgetfulness of the past, and improvidence for the future. While all of these traits were true of them before their conversion, since their baptism an admirable transformation has taken place in their entire manner of life.

Illustrations have been added to the notes in an attempt to make visible, as it were, the marvels of grace which were granted the Indians. These illustrations have the advantage of having been sketched on the spot, and, for the most part, at the very time the events depicted took place. Even as a child I felt compelled to reproduce on paper whatever struck my fancy. My mother, realizing that this instinct might be useful, procured the necessary equipment and encouraged my talent. God rewarded her care, as He did all her sacrifices during her widowhood to further the education of her children.

[In 1841] I found myself deep in the Rocky Mountains, surrounded by scenes about which I had often dreamed as the beautiful ideal of all natural perspectives. The sight of these vistas awakened my early artistic interest, and I found myself beginning to sketch mountains, lakes, streams, forests, flowers, the birds, and the beasts. Then I drew sketches of the savages on their way to battle or smoking the calumet. Finally I sketched landscapes, river scenes, Indian buffalo hunts, hunting feasts, and above all, religious scenes. The products of my brush, in many ways still very primitive, had at least the good effect that they contributed in some small measure to the innocent amusement of the company. Father Pierre Jean De Smet, then my superior, would often say: "Father, here is something beautiful; sketch it for me." I always complied, and I had my reward when, in 1862, he wrote to me: "The little sketches which you were so kind as to make for me are included in my album, together with others relative to the Rocky Mountains. I am very fond of them and they make a very pleasant memento, indeed."

A party of Flatheads met the Jesuit missionaries at Fort Hall on August 15, 1841, and escorted them to the Flathead country in the basin of the Bitter Root River. The site finally selected for the mission was on the right bank of the Bitter Root, about thirty miles north of the present town of Missoula, Montana.

Since it was already September, it was important to choose before winter a site for the future reduction, where temporary shelters could be erected, and to construct, as all fervently desired, a house of prayer. If all this were to be accomplished, no time could be lost. Therefore, we resumed our way, guided by the small group which had been our escort until then.

On September 24, we emerged from the gorge called

Hell Gate onto a broad plain, bordered on the north by the country of the Pend d'Oreilles and on the west by that of the Coeur d'Alenes. But finding nothing there to suit our purpose, we turned south through a gorge, at first narrow but then ever widening. A day later, the third day of our search, we had still found nothing by evening. But arriving at the foot of the largest mountain in the vicinity, we were agreeably surprised at the richness of the vegetation stretched out before us. This luxuriance was due to two streams running north. This large valley, protected against the Blackfeet on the south by a chain of mountains, was sheltered from the rigors of the north by another chain of mountains on whose slopes grew forests, so necessary as a source of construction materials. Between these two ranges ran the river of the Flatheads, called the Bitter Root River. Everyone thought we would be able to find nothing better anywhere else. It was there that we pitched our tents, intending to lay the foundations for our future reduction, which we began by erecting a large cross. I shall always remember the worthy old man Simon, who, in spite of the weight of years, had come to meet us at Fort Hall. While the cross was being hewn, he was seated on the trunk of a tree, obliged to support himself with his stick as a result of the fatigue caused by our last short march. His eyes were fixed on the Tree which saves the world, and which would soon open to him the true fatherland. Seeing him it was easy to divine to what he had attached his heart. He was, I believe, the first to be buried in the shadow of this cross, after having given, during the little time remaining to him, every sign of being a fervent Christian.

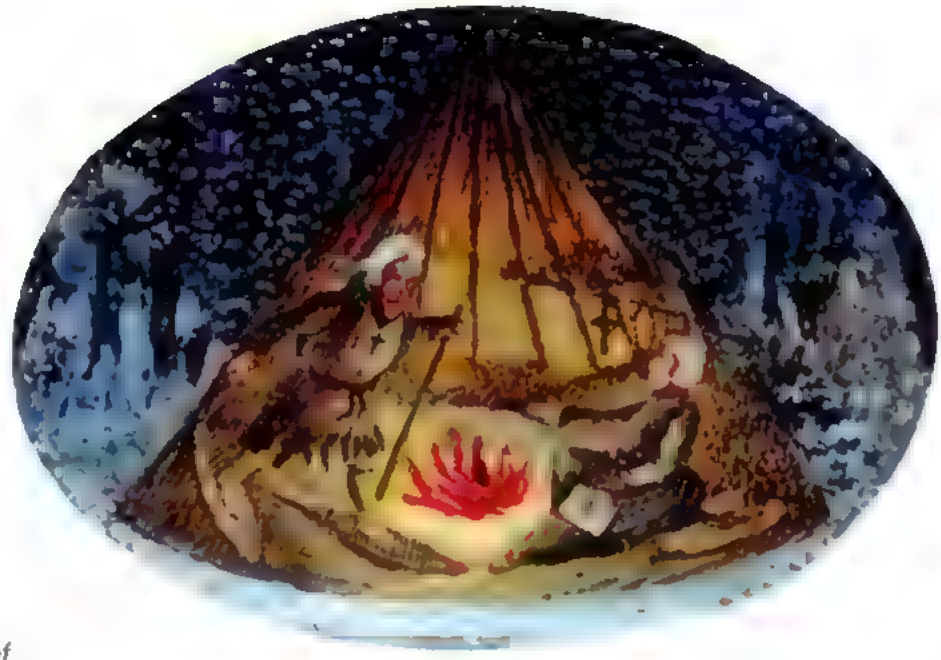
What should be the name of this first reduction in the Rocky Mountains? It was recalled that almost all the principal events in our long voyage had coincided with some Feast of the Blessed Virgin. This was an inspiration to everyone and, in one voice, we said, "It will be called St. Mary's." We shall see that the Divine Mother did not leave this manifestation of devotion unanswered. May the memory of Her blessings live forever in the hearts of Her new children.

An untitled decorative device from Father Point's Journal—the dove bearing sprigs of olive to Noah's Ark.

On December 3, the Feast of Saint Francis Xavier, 202 catechumens were gathered in the nave of the chapel to receive holy baptism. They had been sufficiently well instructed and could answer intelligibly all the questions put by the priest. I shall never forget the

"One becomes a medicine man only after making a pilgrimage during which he . . eventually receives a 'sign' from a bear, a red deer, a green ram, or perhaps even from a monster." (See page 42)

" 'Ah!' said the most incredulous among them. 'Now we see very well that the prayers of the Blackrobes are more powerful than ours.' " (See page 73)



(Right) *This Spokane Indian, aged one hundred and four, walked twenty miles through snow to ask for baptism.* *(See page 71.)*

(Below) *The wigwam in the center of the picture indicates where Little Paul saw the vision of the Blessed Virgin.* *(See page 40.)*

tone of these answers. Except for time taken for dinner, the ceremony lasted from six o'clock in the morning until nine o'clock in the evening. It was noted that the Great Chief, who had been baptized two years earlier and who was almost a nonagenarian, wished to be present from the beginning to the end of the ceremony. What was still more remarkable was the apparition of St. Francis Xavier seen by a catechumen of the tribe of the Crees, a man named Michael. The event was related by him with such simplicity that it was impossible to be at all suspicious of deceit. The person, so said the Indian, was standing, elevated above the earth to the height of the altar on the epistle side, and was wearing over his cassock a surplice and a stole, and had on his head a hat such as the Fathers wore.

Hardly out of his infancy, a little Flathead of an angelic beauty, sweetness, and piety was most desirous of being baptized, but had such a poor memory that, in spite of all his efforts, he had been unable to learn what was rigorously required for the reception of this favor. And the second administration of the sacrament was to take place the following day; that was Christmas Day. This pious child said to himself, "I shall go to find Jean. Perhaps he will be able to teach me what I must know."

He rose, went into Jean's wigwam, and a few minutes later emerged in perfect command of the prayers. But it was neither Jean, Jean's brother, nor Jean's mother, who had taught him, for they were no better instructed than the others. He had a teacher, greater than all the instructors in the world, the Queen of Heaven herself. Here is the story, as the child repeated it on several occasions, without ever once contradicting himself:

"The moment I entered Jean's wigwam, I saw, above the fireplace, a very beautiful person. I do not know whether it was a man or a woman, for the person wore garments such as I had never seen before. Beneath the feet of this person there was a snake, and, beside the snake, a kind of fruit I had not seen before. Around this person, there was a very bright light. The person looked at me in a kindly manner, and in that instant my mind became clear, my heart became warm. I have no idea how all of this came about, but suddenly I knew my prayers. Then the person disappeared. This person told me that she was happy that our village had chosen to be called the name St. Mary's."

The veracity of the child's story is attested by the incontrovertible fact that, when he returned to his own wigwam, he could recite all the prayers with the greatest ease. Needless to say, on Christmas Day he was admitted to the sacrament without difficulty. The child received

Portions from the original manuscript of Father Point's journal.

the name of Paul at his baptism. He was called Little Paul, to distinguish him from Great Paul, who was known also as the Great Face.

As Father Point saw it, the major obstacle in the way of the conversion and civilization of the Indians was the power of "medicine." Substantial passages in his journals are devoted to detailed description of Indian medicine—and some of the most colorful or dramatic anecdotes deal with the direct confrontation of the Blackrobes' religion and the red mans' superstition.

To be "strong in medicine" is to be at one and the same time a prophet, a miracle-worker, a kind of pontiff. Such a medicine man is the recipient of revelations. Prodigious feats are accomplished by him and his religious authority is virtually absolute. The foregoing justifies the conclusion that satanic power is firmly established here; human dignity is degraded, divine majesty is eradicated, and an untold number of souls are eternally lost. Such are the fruits of the perfidious work called "medicine," fruits which will perhaps become more evident in the course of this account.

This power can be acquired only through rigorous fasting, great mortification, long pilgrimages; during sleep, during a fainting spell, during a fit of delirium; arousing or satisfying some passion; and never without rendering homage to the real or pretended spirit which is the source of the power. But let us see how the candidate for "medicine" begins. He is still in that state in which he is wretched, ignorant, worthy of pity—I almost added good for nothing. This is roughly what one who is "strong in medicine" calls those who are not. As long as the candidate remains in this state of misery, it is easy to see by what temptation he is ordinarily assailed. If his temptation is stronger than usual or if the ambition of his father prompts him, the candidate will depart, traveling over hill and dale, like an errant knight. Where he is going, it is useless to ask, for he does not know himself. He will go where his impulses send him, but, melancholy as his temperament is at such a time, it can be guessed that he will most probably seek solitude. He penetrates the fastness of a somber forest, he scales a precipitous rocky slope, or follows the twisting shore of a lake. The majestic scenes around him penetrate his imagination, but do not elevate his thoughts above the objects he sees immediately about him. The sky is to him nonexistent; he thinks only of the earth and wants only the earth, since it is the earth that gives existence to everything anyone knows. Thus it is to the earth that he addresses

A sorcerer.

A medicine man.

his first prayers. If she remains deaf to them, he turns to a nearby tree, moved by a need to pray to a being more powerful than himself. Embracing the trunk wildly, he cries, "O you who are the most beautiful, the greatest, the strongest of all the children of the forest, take pity on an unfortunate one who has recourse to you." His prayer ends, but, his idea still remaining fixedly with him, he resumes his way and, unless he collapses from fatigue or want of food—for he is fasting—he continues to walk until he encounters something extraordinary, or at least something which appears so to him.

Usually, what he is in search of will present itself to him late in the day when the setting sun produces its most magical effects. It may be a deer, a bear, a beaver, or some other animal, but of a color and a shape never beheld at any other time. Or it may be something which resembles a man, but which is not a man—a monster, a kind of giant, a colossus vomiting fire from its mouth. Or it may be a dwarf, so small as to be hardly distinguishable among the foliage, but so agile that the swiftest chase will not overtake it. In any event, the man or the fantastic animal will articulate words that are in harmony with the desires of the searcher—or else he will disappear after an instant or two, or reappear while the visionary is asleep or in a fainting spell (for excessive fatigue—if not other factors—sometimes reduces him to this state). If he is not more fortunate during this final stage than during the preceding ones, it is a sign that he was not made for medicine.

But it is rare that his luck is so poor. Let us suppose, in order to make more evident the kind of resources a "medical" head can lay hold of, that it has been the lot of our candidate to have only a third-class encounter. You can be sure that his genius for invention will be able to make up for all deficiencies. He will make certain of returning to his father's dwelling just when the time for serious talks has arrived. The first thing he will do upon arriving will be to fill his pipe. He will smoke in silence, like a man who has momentous information to communicate, until his audience, attracted by the smell of the calumet, has had time to assemble. Then, if the moment seems propitious, he will announce that he is about to speak. After completing his turn at the pipe, he will begin to speak. Before announcing his great news,

he will not fail to mention everything calculated to increase interest. At length he will describe what he has seen, while everyone listens eagerly. If he is naturally of a cheerful disposition, he will have seen a red sign, a green ram, a white deer. If his disposition is somber, he will have encountered thunder after a storm, which assumed the shape of a man and then changed into the likeness of a tree. If he is normally inclined to the whimsical, he will say that he saw a wolf which was so long that, while its tail was still in the country of the Nez Percés, its ears were in the country of the Coeur d'Alenes. And so it goes. But what did the things he saw say to him? Oh, many great things! He was told, for example, what he must believe regarding their attributes, how he must pay homage to their powers, and what he might expect through their favors. Now the idea of favor is immensely appealing to the savage. Accordingly, at this word some of his audience, wide-eyed and eager, ask what he received and what he was promised.

The speaker continues in grave tones: " 'Do not forget, the red sign told me, 'that it is from me you have your power. Here is a feather to which I have given the ability

Continued on page 70

Ignace Temisposomen, first Coeur d'Alene chief to receive baptism.

A heavenly envoy announces the glad tidings of salvation to the Coeur d'Alenes and commands the devil to depart from the land.

On the Yukon River near Circle.

Stampede Towns OF THE UPPER YUKON

BY DAVID WHARTON

Editor's note: *In the late summer of 1964, David Wharton and a party of six, including photographer Philip Hyde, took two flat-bottomed boats on a six-hundred-mile Yukon River trip from the Canadian border to Tanana, deep in the wilderness heart of Alaska. It was a two-week journey into the past, a visit to a few surviving relics of the great days of Klondike gold, the boom-and-bust stampede towns that cling to a precarious existence in times that have passed them by and may obliterate them.*

At the end of the nineteenth century, when men struggled to reach the Klondike gold fields, the upper Yukon country of Alaska was a brutally inhospitable wilderness. It still is. There is nothing soft or pleasant about the land or the river from Tanana to the Canadian border. The short summers barely punctuate the harsh dominance of the long winters. The forests of skinny spruce that blanket the banks of the river are a jackstraw jumble of deadfalls. Grassy clearings do not exist. The ground is a soggy sponge spread over permafrost. The river banks are steep and muddy; the occasional open stretches of shore are bleak and uninviting shingle. The gold miners who swarmed up the river and back sixty-eight years ago have left little mark of their passing. The shallow-draft sternwheel steamers no longer navigate the river, and the forests that were cut and split to feed their fires have long since been replaced by a wilderness that scarcely tolerates open land. This is a land where the sense of void and timelessness is almost complete—undiluted by an encompassing civilization a few hours away.

It was in this country that men created the towns of the upper Yukon: Eagle, Nation, Chicken, Star City, Circle, Fort Yukon, Beaver, Rampart, and Tanana. Barter, fur trade, or gold put these towns on the early maps. Some have disappeared; others survive as historical artifacts, museum pieces of early Alaska.

Eagle, on the Canadian border, was the earliest American establishment on the Yukon River, and for a decade around the turn of the century it was the most important town in central Alaska. Here was Fort Egbert, built in 1899. Here was the headquarters of Judge Wickersham, the only source of formal justice in an area the size of Texas. This administrative center for eastern Alaska then had two trading posts, a couple of restaurants, half-a-dozen saloons, several churches, a hospital, and an entrepreneur who delivered water from house to house in the winter, saving citizens the frigid trip down to the river, where a barrel set in the ice served as town well.

Eagle was the dateline on one of the most important news stories of 1905. On the mouldering remains of a log cabin that once housed the only telegraph office in the upper Yukon, a weatherbeaten sign proclaims: "It was from this building that Capt. Roald Amundsen in December of 1905 sent a cable to the King of Norway announcing the successful navigation of the Northwest Passage. Captain Amundsen left his ship at Kay Point on the Arctic Ocean and crossed five hundred miles of unexplored country and a mountain range nine thousand feet high in midwinter to reach Eagle and report a feat

which had eluded explorers for three centuries."

When we arrived at Eagle at ten-thirty on the morning of August 9, 1964, it was—as a Fairbanks reporter remarked—a town with more churches than houses, more houses than people, and more people than necessary. Evidences of old Fort Egbert were hard to find. Of six churches, only two were in even occasional use. The population was at its summer maximum of eighteen. There were two airstrips and four hundred feet of telephone line running from the postmaster's house to the restaurant that he operated. During the few hours we were there, we met most of the populace, including an army recruiting sergeant from Fairbanks, who had a two-room log cabin in Eagle stocked with beer and hi-fi equipment, and a Mrs. McKenzie, whose husband owned Eagle Bluff, a mountain just outside of town. Mr. McKenzie, she confided, had been offered five million dollars for the mountain, but he wouldn't sell because it was rich in ore and worth *eight* million.

Banks of the Yukon at Beaver.

Our Indian guide, who was to take us the six hundred miles from Eagle to Tanana, arrived late in the afternoon; but as summer nights are short in northern Alaska, we loaded our two flatboats and pushed off at 9 P.M. to get in some travel before dark. We dropped away from Eagle in the gray, transparent light of the Arctic summer evening, and the relative warmth of the shore was replaced by a bitter chill as the boats swept downriver, pushed by the swift current and kicked along by outboard motors. The Yukon originates in glaciers and flows through an icebox of permafrost. Beneath its sun-warmed surface, the water is frigid; the life expectancy of anyone falling overboard is short. In the nearly two hundred miles betwen Eagle and Circle, there is not a single inhabited building. Modern Geological Survey maps, reflecting history, show ten cabins along this river stretch—cabins once used by mail carriers traveling the Yukon by dogsled. The maps mark Miller's Camp, Woodchopper Roadhouse, and the towns of Nation and Chicken. After each is the notation "ABANDONED." Star City, located at the mouth of Seventy Mile Creek, is not even shown.

A "stampede town," as gold camps were called, Star City was a sizable community in 1899. By 1925, Hudson Stuck, Episcopal Archdeacon of the Yukon, who traveled up and down the river for many years giving religious and medical attention to the Indians, could find no trace of the town. Perhaps it was once located at the mouth of that creek where a cow moose and her calf watched us drift by. Or it might have been where we saw the four bull moose or the lone black timber wolf, or where we stopped and caught grayling in a clear tributary. It might have been at any of these places, but no sign of habitation was left.

The second day on the river, we passed the site of Chicken, but not an adzed log remained as evidence of the town. According to Judge Wickersham, who dispensed justice and collected taxes in the mining towns following his arrival at Eagle in 1900, the name derived from a gold find on the sand bars, where nuggets were the size of the cracked corn fed to chickens. A more intriguing version has it that the town was called Ptarmigan, after the game bird native to the area, but since no one could spell Ptarmigan, the name was listed on the maps of the day as Chicken.

Time, motionless, at Eagle.

LATER THAT DAY, we arrived at Circle, so named because it was once thought to be precisely on the Arctic Circle. Typical of the stampede towns of the Yukon, Circle owed its existence in a roundabout way to Leroy Napoleon (Jack) McQuesten, a prospector from British Columbia who arived on the Yukon in 1873 with the first party of American gold-hunters. Twenty years later, when Jack McQuesten was operating a trading post at Forty Mile (just across the Canadian border on the Yukon), two half-Indian, half-Russian miners named Sarosky and Pitka hit him up for a grubstake to try their luck on Birch Creek, which runs parallel to the Yukon. Later that year, the two men found gold on the Mastodon, a tributary of Birch Creek. They staked their finds and went to Tanana to file claims. There they met three Americans who were looking for guides to take them to Preacher's Creek, where "gold could be picked up by the handfuls."

The tales of Preacher's Creek were part fact, part fancy. The fact: Archdeacon Robert McDonald of the Church of England, stationed at Fort Yukon when it belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company, reported the finding of gold during his travels among the Indians between 1862 and 1870. A young clerk of the company wrote to his father in Ontario about the gold, referring to it as the "preacher's gold find." The fancy: to add romance to his dull job, the clerk combined all the deacon's small findings into one great find on what he called Preacher's Creek. This account gained some notoriety in Canada and the United States, the story being brought back to Alaska years later by American prospectors.

It was this "stampeder's dream" that the three Americans were seeking when they met Sarosky and Pitka. Since the half-breeds' account of sand bars filled with gold suggested Preacher's Creek, the Americans hired Sarosky and Pitka to guide them to the area. They followed the Yukon to a shallow bend where it was easy to draw the boats out of the river. After establishing a cache, they trekked overland to the headwaters of Birch Creek, and there they found gold. Having insufficient supplies for the winter, the five returned to their cache on the Yukon.

News of gold travels fast, but the men were astonished to find a stampede already started when they reached the banks of the Yukon. They soon realized, however, that it was not their own find but the report of the half-breeds' earlier strike on the Mastodon that had sparked the rush. Fortunately, the new arrivals had brought stores of food

The present annotated, Circle City.

The past updated, Tanana.

and equipment, sent downriver from Forty Mile by the enterprising McQuesten—never one to miss a bet, especially when he had grubstaked the discovery. It was too late in the year to return to Birch Creek and work surface claims, so the men remained on the Yukon and began construction of cabins for the winter, inadvertently founding the town of Circle.

Jack McQuesten soon followed and opened a trading post. It was here that he developed the notorious McQuesten thermometer, consisting of four small bottles that he kept on a shelf just outside the door to his trading post. One was filled with quicksilver, one with whiskey, one with kerosene, and the fourth with Perry Davis' Painkiller. When the quicksilver jelled, a man should not plan to be on the trail overnight. When the whiskey solidified, he should not leave Circle. If the kerosene froze, he was well-advised to stay pretty close to his cabin. When Perry Davis' Painkiller froze, it wasn't safe to step away from the fire.

Within three years, Circle had a population of three thousand, a circulating library of several thousand volumes, a two-story log opera house, literary societies, churches, and a hospital. There were also, of course, the saloons and gambling dens, where John McLernan was reported to have won $25,000 at poker, a windfall that grubstaked him to a career as Jack Kearns, boxing promoter. Here, "Hootch" Albert distilled his own brand of whiskey from the cheapest ingredients he could freight up the river. Some say the name "hooch" for rotgut liquor comes from the Circle of 1896 and Hootch Albert; others say that Hootch Albert got his name because the stuff he served over his bar was as raw and vicious as that made by a tribe of Tlingit Indians known as the Hutsnuwu, pronounced "hoochinoo" by the sourdoughs, or "hooch" for short.

Of the Yukon area in general, it was said, "There's never a law of God or man runs north of fifty-three"; but Circle had a Miners Association and a jail with a sign posted on the door: "*Notice: all prisoners must report by 9 o'clock* P.M. *or they will be locked out for the night*"—no mean threat during the long winter nights when Perry Davis' Painkiller might freeze.

In 1896, an American prospector by the name of George W. Carmack, accompanied by his Indian wife's relatives, Tagish Charlie and Skookum Jim, arrived in Forty Mile to file claims on Bonanza Creek, tributary to the Klondike. Within a year, the Klondike stampede was on, and Circle was almost deserted.

Today, there is a large sign on the bank of the Yukon welcoming visitors to Circle City. The sign lists the population as 87, although some new father, unable to wait for an official change in the census, has drawn a pencil line through this figure and noted "88" beside it. There is only one store today, no saloon, no hospital, no library. The opera house still stands, but it is now a residence littered with children's toys.

CONTRARY TO THE BELIEF of the early stampeders, the Arctic Circle is fifty air miles north of Circle. The imaginary line that marks the beginning of the Arctic actually runs a mile south of Fort Yukon, where the longest day of the year is twenty-four hours, as the sun rolls across the horizon without ever dipping from sight. Fort Yukon was established by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1847, when it was assumed that the Yukon flowed north into the Arctic Ocean. The Russians likewise were not sure of the course of the Yukon, which they knew by its Indian name, *Kwikpak*. It was not until after American acquisition of Alaska in 1867 that the true course of the Yukon became known, and in 1869 an officer of the United States Army ascended to Fort Yukon and gave notice to the Hudson's Bay Company post that it was on

Home sweet home in Fort Yukon.

Photographs by Philip Hyde

Rear entrance to a house in Eagle.

American soil and should vacate the premises, please. For some years following the Company's ouster, there were no white men on the Yukon River.

Fort Yukon was never a stampede town. It grew and declined alternately as trading post, Indian village, supply depot for the upper Yukon, steamboat stop, and missionary center. It is today the largest town of the upper Yukon, with a population of several hundred, an active trading post, a number of small stores, a post office, a school, three churches, a Council Meeting Hall, an airport, and a 4-H club. The young boys hang around the stores listening to Beatle records; the young girls lounge through the streets in stretchy pants, their hair bristling with pink curlers. As a town, it exists because the Indians originally attracted to the Fort Yukon trading post have made it their home for a hundred years. It exists because there is a military base nearby, providing a transient economy. It exists because Alaska's first United States Senator, Ernest Greuning, has not yet been unable to obtain a multi-billion-dollar appropriation to build the dam in the Lower Ramparts that would flood the entire upper Yukon Valley.

Unlike the people of the towns upriver, the Indians of Fort Yukon have become actively embroiled in present-day politics and formed the GGG (*Gwitchya Gwitchin Ginkhye*, Yukon Flats People Speak) to fight for their homes and hunting lands. As one Indian elder explained, "If dam built, no salmon; no salmon, no food for dogs; no dogs, no trap lines; no trap lines, no living."

More immediately, Fort Yukon is threatened from another direction. During construction of the military base gravel was needed, so engineers dredged the river above Fort Yukon, creating a new channel that has caused the river to undercut its banks on the edge of the town. The Corps of Engineers obtained an appropriation to build a dam closing off this new channel but ran out of money before it could be completed. Already, the river has cut a hundred feet into the town. Alarmed citizens claim that in three years the school, the Council Meeting Hall, the trading post —most of the town in fact—will be consumed by the river. Fort Yukon citizens may be overly pessimistic. Erosion of the town, though perhaps accelerated by the gravel dredging, is nothing new. A resident complained more than forty years ago that one drawback to Fort Yukon was the constant and sometimes rapid erosion of the river bank. During the summer of 1916, more than one hundred feet of the town was undercut and swept into the river. Stores, warehouses, a road-

The waterfront at Circle.

house, the mission houses, and many cabins had to be torn down and rebuilt farther back. The difficulty with repeating this move today is the march of bureaucracy in the wilderness.

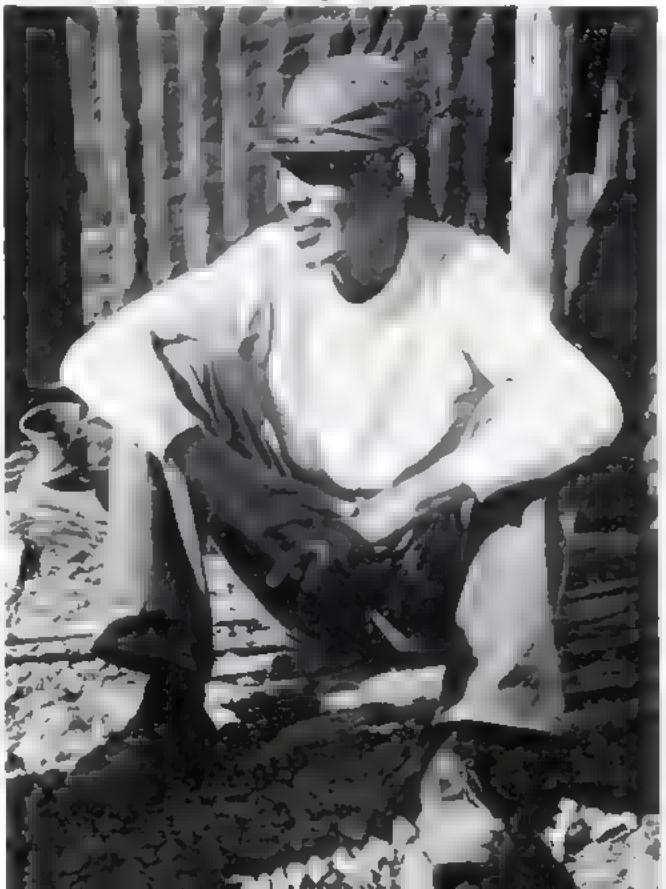
A young school teacher outlined the problem for us. Three years ago, he bought land in the town and built a house, where he lives with his wife and one child. Since then, he has lost forty feet of his front yard and will eventually lose it all, including his house, unless he can buy some land farther back from the river and move it. This seemingly logical solution has been rendered impossible by an injunction against the sale of land in and around the town, pending a decision on whether or not Rampart Dam is to be constructed.

FORT YUKON IS ON THE EDGE of the Yukon Flats, a three-hundred-mile stretch of the river where the width is measured in miles, where changing channels, islands, sloughs, meanders, dead-end lakes, and tens of thousands of ponds constitute a maze that challenges the skill and knowledge of the most experienced guide. The only other town in the Flats is Beaver, an anomaly among the towns of the upper Yukon.

Beaver was not established as a trading post, nor was it a stampede town. It was founded in 1900 by an expatriate Japanese, a room steward who jumped ship at Point Barrow, married an Eskimo, and with her entire family trekked south to the Yukon, where they settled, starting the town of Beaver. The residents of Beaver still speak Eskimo, although there has been considerable intermarriage with the Kutchin Indians, who, like other Indians native to the Yukon basin, are members of the Athabascan linguistic group.

Typical of their Eskimo origin, the people of Beaver are friendly, warm, more outgoing than the other river people. Toorak, proprietor of a small store, greeted me in the street soon after we arrived and insisted that I have

A Yukon fisherman at Ramparts.



breakfast with him. He had come to Beaver in 1912 with his father and mother, and could recall hearing about the great days of the Yukon, with its frenetic stampeders in search of gold; but the history of Beaver, as he knew it, was associated with fishing and trapping.

Toorak introduced us to an eighty-seven-year-old Norwegian trapper, a gentle but vigorous old man with guileless blue eyes. As he joined us for coffee, he recalled the old days of trapping when there had been good money in otter, beaver, marten, and fox pelts—before imitation furs and new materials ruined the fur market. But, he guessed, money was never an important factor in trapping. No matter how much money he made when the fur market was good, he never thought of leaving the Yukon for an easier life. When winter came, it was the traplines and the bone-numbing nights of cooking a piece of frozen meat over an open fire in the snow. It was the solitude of a frozen river in the heart of a spruce forest, the Arctic wind sifting snow off the mountain ridges, the chilling howl of the wolf, the pitting of human skill against animal cunning, and the substantial comfort of a dingy cabin with its stove and woodpile waiting beside it, and a dry bunk after days on the open trail.

Abandoned buildings at Tanana.

Times were changing, times were changing, he sighed. The days of the dogs were numbered. Smoked salmon brought a $1.25 at fishing camp, where bush pilots flew in and paid cash on the barrelhead. At that price, a man could no longer afford to feed a dog salmon. It was more economical to get a powered sled and buy gasoline, or hire a bush pilot to fly you out to the trap lines and backpack in at the end of your go.

Beaver has an air of independence and enterprise that is missing in the other towns. The people have organized for civic improvement. They have put in drains, brought in gravel, and built raised walks to defeat the mud. Toorak was getting a $30,000-dollar loan from the Indian Affairs Department to enlarge and stock his store. It is a drab, wilderness-cramped settlement of only one hundred souls, but alive with a singular energy.

UNLIKE BEAVER AND FORT YUKON, Rampart, the next town down the Yukon, is unquestionably dying. Located where the river pulls in its belly to squeeze through the mountains of the Lower Ramparts after its long and lazy sweep through the Flats, Rampart at the turn of the century had a population of fifteen hundred. Novelist Rex Beach lived here and used the town and its people as background for *The Barrier*. Jack London stopped over at Rampart on his way down the Yukon from Dawson and the Klondike. A hard-eyed drifter by the name of Wyatt Earp pushed drinks in a bar all winter to get enough money to keep going. Today the population is one; but the lone, permanent resident—known to us only as Weisner—is a community in himself. He is trader, storekeeper, bookkeeper, cannery operator, doctor, lawyer, miner, and postmaster.

A trading post is not like a city store, he explained. "It isn't as simple as just buying and selling. For example, I start with salmon, bought from the Indians. But the Fish and Wildlife officer tells me I can't buy from fishermen without licenses or I'll be liable to a large fine. Now, none of the Indians buy licenses. Where would they get them out here? So before I buy salmon, I have to buy a lot of licenses and give them to the Indians from whom I buy the salmon. I have a cannery where I hire all the Indian women who want to work. They come and go. They work a few days and then quit. I can't keep track. They tell me how much they work later.

"After canning the salmon I get from the Indians, for

Continued on page 73

THE TRIP TO TOWN

BY MILTON E. SHATRAW

FIFTY-ODD YEARS AGO, ON MY FATHER'S CATTLE RANCH in northwestern Montana, a trip to town, ten miles away, was a real event in our lives. Sometimes the excitement began even before we started out. One time we were all ready to start when my younger sister, dressed in all her Sears Roebuck finery, walked straight off the edge of the bridge across our creek into four feet of water. My father pulled her out and shook her back to her senses, I rescued her hat as it floated downstream, and my mother dragged her, howling, back to the house to repair the damages.

The earliest of these offside events that I remember hearing about took place when I was about three years old. It involved my mother and Bugeater, an ex-cowpony who was generally steady and reliable but was given to occasional lapses from conformity. He was the source of the abiding distrust my mother had for all driving horses. A former city girl, she had never quite gotten the knack of handling the beasts. In fact, it was years before she became convinced that you pulled on the lines—not pushed—to make the horse go ahead.

On this particular day when my father was away with his threshing rig, Mother decided to drive to town. While we dressed, the hired man hitched Bugeater to

the light buggy and tied him to the hitching post outside the cabin door, not far from the small mountain of split stove wood that always stood by the corner of the house. I can recall now the sense of anticipation I felt as my sister and I settled into the seat and watched Mother pick up the lines and give Bugeater a gentle slap with them across his rear. The result was instantaneous. Bugeater spied the woodpile behind him. Never having climbed a woodpile, the idea apparently fascinated him. He took off at a queer kind of backward gallop, and in no time at all we hit full tilt and stopped, the buggy perched rakishly half way up the woodpile. The passengers had but one thought—abandon ship! We must have all jumped for the same spot at the same time, for we landed in a heap on the ground. Bugeater stopped dead still and looked back over his shoulder at us with what my mother always insisted was a smirk. We sorted ourselves out, discovered no damage to ourselves or the wagon, and, after Mother had vented her Cockney wrath on the culprit, proceeded to climb a bit hesitantly back into the buggy. Bugeater, chastened either by the unexpected resistance of the woodpile or by my mother's tongue-lashing, carried us to town and back as sedately as a country parson conducting prayer meeting.

Vehicles of transportation in those days might be anything from a four-horse team and lumber wagon to a high-speed cow pony hitched between the shafts of a light buggy. And the roads were hardly deserving of the name. Occasionally, where a road come down a hillside into a valley, there was some rough grading, and streams sometimes sported a crude bridge, though most were forded at a shallow spot. But most of the roads were never laid out or constructed at all; they just happened. Ranchers would drive back and forth to town following the path of least resistance, and after a while these well-worn ruts across the prairie became known as "roads."

Our horses came in a variety of colors, sizes, and a wide range of talents. The work horses, docile and slow, were used when the load was heavy. The saddle ponies were strictly for riding, and would kick apart or run away with anything on wheels. A fast but gentle driving horse was hard to come by, and was greatly prized, especially by the women. Then there were the jokers—emotional, stubborn, cantankerous, unpredictable beasts . . . like Bugeater.

Ordinarily, my father drove on our trips to town, and the whole family went along, for these were big events—breaks in the long stretch of lonely days on the prairie. The trips, of course, were subject to weather conditions. Three or four hours in an open wagon during a driving rainstorm or a blizzard could pretty well dampen your enthusiasm for any kind of a trip. But even if the day was clear and balmy when you started, there was no knowing what it would be like when you were ready to come home. Our part of Montana was known for its sudden shifts in weather, sometimes because of the abrupt thaws brought in on the Chinook winds from the coast, sometimes because of icy gales from the high mountains that could turn the air bitterly cold as suddenly as the Chinook could warm it.

Just getting ready for a trip could be a frustrating and time-consuming experience. It usually fell to me to take a halter, walk a quarter of a mile to a 160-acre pasture lot, and try to catch a half-wild horse that didn't want to be caught. The minute even a dumb horse saw me stalking him with a halter, he grew suspicious and kept a clean hundred feet between us. The smart ones were warier. Eventually, with a pan of oats and a mouth full of sweet talk, I could manage to seduce the critter I was after; but it took a lot of perseverance, and the horse always seemed to enjoy the pastime more than I. Once I got the halter on him, however, he invariably became so amiable that he would step all over my feet and slobber down my neck, and I would have to go back into the house and change my shirt again.

My father, in the meantime, was—with many an "ouch" and "damn"—subjecting his week's growth of whiskers to his well-stropped (but seldom really sharp) straight razor, and forcing his unwilling limbs into his one and only suit—dark green and decidedly tight, as I remember it. My mother and my oldest sister Iris, after scrubbing and dressing the squealing, squirming small fry and perching them on separate chairs at a safe distance from one another, threatening dire punishments if they moved a muscle or in any way got a speck of dirt on their clean clothes or shining faces, began their own special ritual of "getting ready." First, my mother lit an oil lamp and slipped the curling iron down into the chimney above the flame to heat while she put on and laced up her long, black town shoes. I liked to watch her take the curling iron out, lick one finger and touch it to see if it hissed, wind her straight red strands of hair around it, hold it steaming (or smoking) for a moment, then pull it away from the little

Continued on page 75

The *BEAR* of the North

BY ROGER OLMSTED

This year has been the centennial of the acquisition of Alaska by the United States. Once the "Frozen North" was not too far behind the Civil War as a subject to delight the eye of the publisher—but times have changed, and not even the Centennial Year has been sufficient to bring forth much new on Alaska.

Indeed, historical scholarship is so far lagging that what may be the best of the centennial publications manages to get by without mention of the Alaska Packers' Association—a feat roughly comparable to a history of California without the Southern Pacific Railroad.

For Alaska was, and is, an island in the northern sea, and her history is more maritime than terrestrial, even into this age in which the air is the sea.

Within this context, it is not too surprising that Alaska should have been the focal point in the biography of the greatest ship in the history of the West, perhaps the greatest ship in history. This ship was the Bear *of the Revenue Marine. I once spent some time trying to save this ship as an historical monument. Unfortunately, the project might have cost as much as fifty feet of freeway.*

At the time, I did sift through about a thousand pictures documenting the career of this great ship, and I had a hundred or so printed. Following are about a dozen of these views, with a little story suggestive of the character of one of American Alaska's most important and colorful personages.

—R.O.

The *Thetis* and *Bear* (*right*) embark the survivors *of* Lieutenant Greely's Arctic Expedition— 3 A.M., June 23, 1884.

THE UNITED STATES bought the *Bear* in 1884 because she was a St. John's sealer, a ship of oak doubled and redoubled and sheathed with ironbark; because, as Admiral Byrd gratefully noted fifty years later, "ice was her meat"; because there was no such ship in the service of the United States; and because some men of that service were dying.

The dying men belonged to the Signal Corps's scientific expedition to Lady Franklin Bay, Ellesmere Island, up near the northern tip of Greenland. This expedition, led by Lieutenant A. W. Greely, had established "Fort Conger" (at 81°45′) as part of a two-year international program of circumpolar observations. Hard luck, compounded by penury and bungling, frustrated the supporting parties: chartered St. John's sealers failed to supply the men in 1882, to relieve them in '83, or to cache sufficient stores along the escape route to insure their survival in case of their successful retreat southward.

Prompted by outcries that Lieutenant Greely and his men were shamefully abandoned, the government bought the sealers *Bear* and *Thetis* for rescue ships. A sense of terrible urgency, inspired by the well-founded fear that Greely and his party were starving to death in the Arctic wastes, animated the outfitting of the relief expedition. The *Bear*, the first to sail, left the Brooklyn Navy Yard on April 24, 1884, amidst the cheers of thousands of spectators. Two months later, the crew of the *Bear's* steam launch found Lieutenant Greely and the pitiful remnant of his expedition at Cape Sabine, at the northern end of Baffin Bay.

DOUBTS as to the proper disposition of the *Bear* and *Thetis* after their triumphal return to New York were soon resolved. The splendid characteristics of these vessels argued their retention in government service. The navy kept the *Thetis* and the Revenue Marine acquired the *Bear* to spearhead the small group of cutters that were carrying the rapidly increasing burdens of government in Alaskan waters. The Treasury Department had made an astonishingly good bargain: for forty years the *Bear* was to be the mainstay of the most arduous patrol in the Revenue Cut-

(*Above*) The great reindeer drive in midwinter, 1897-98, saved the lives of nearly three hundred whalers stranded at Point Barrow.

(*Below*) Alaska owed her reindeer herds to the cutter *Bear*, which season after season in the 1890's transported the animals from Siberia to breeding stations on the Seward Peninsula.

ter Service—the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean beat.

Captain M. A. Healy, who in the early 1880's had piloted the pretty little steam brigantine *Corwin* through the ice to Point Barrow, took command of the more powerful *Bear* at San Francisco early in 1886. The *Bear* made the first of her thirty cruises to Point Barrow that summer. Along the coasts of the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean the *Bear* represented the most important, and often the sole, arm of government and public service. The schools, the law, medical service, disaster relief, the mails, life-saving, salvage, transportation of persons or goods for the public interest, protection of the seal herds, even the census, were among the responsibilities of the master of the *Bear*. To the Eskimo of northwestern Alaska the *Bear* was the United States; like the *Corwin* before her, she was "Healy's *oomiak puk*"—the "fire canoe" of Iron Mike Healy.

For maritime company in the Arctic seas the *Bear* had the whalers, and the whalers were glad of the company. Nearly every year down through the first decade of this century, the *Bear* spent some part of her summer cruise following up reports of starvation, shipwrecks, or castaways among the whaling fleet. Hundreds of men have owed their lives to the strength of the *Bear* and the energy of her crews. In the treacherous Arctic Ocean not merely a single ship but the whole whaling fleet might suddenly face destruction. It happened in 1871, in 1876, and again in 1897.

On November 6, 1897, the *Bear* arrived at Seattle, where her men were to be paid off after a six-month cruise that had carried them east of Point Barrow, and where the *Bear* was to

Caught fast in the shifting floes at Point Barrow in August, 1898. . . . This little "nip" squeezed the engine bed-plates up four inches—and it took four of the steam whalers she had come to rescue to get the *Bear* out again.

be laid up for the winter. But news was waiting that the whaling fleet, tarrying later than the *Bear*, had been trapped by the ice in the Arctic Ocean.

President McKinley ordered the *Bear* manned and fitted out to attempt the relief of nearly three hundred men, caught either aboard their ships or at Barrow, who faced starvation before the ice broke up in July. Captain Tuttle and his entire crew volunteered for the expedition, and the *Bear* sailed for the ice-bound Bering Sea before the end of the month.

Although the *Bear* would not be able to break through the Barrow for eight months, an ambulatory food supply for the imperiled men existed in the form of the reindeer herds that the *Bear* had introduced into the Cape Prince of Wales area from Siberia during the preceding six years. A small party might drive the deer overland to Point Barrow. The *Bear's* job was to push as far north as she could, land the relief party (Lieutenant Jarvis, Lieutenant Bertholf, and Surgeon Call), then retire to Unalaska, prepared to sail for Barrow at the earliest possible date the following summer.

Cape Vancouver was as close to the

(*Above*) Leading the way into Nome. . . . A traveler aboard the *Bear* wrote, "As we passed in sight again of the steamships *Senator* and *Portland* their rigging was crowded with passengers watching the *Bear* force her way through the ice fields. One of the passengers whom I afterwards saw at Nome said that it was the grandest sight he had ever seen, and worth the cost of the trip to witness."

(*Right*) Two impassive Eskimos are carried off to jail at Teller in 1905 as the *Bear* engages in the annual ritual of bringing Uncle Sam's justice to the shores of the Bering Sea. The captain of the *Bear* ordinarily served as U. S. commissioner to the lands beyond Unimak Pass, and the *Bear* herself was often courtroom, station-house, or sea-going paddy wagon

reindeer herds as the *Bear* could get. Undaunted, the relief party landed, trudged to the Seward Peninsula, collected 450 reindeer, and with the aid of a missionary and an Eskimo pushed on through the long nights. On March 29, 103 days after the *Bear* had landed her men at Cape Vancouver, the deer herd reached the whalers.

The men at Barrow, crowded into a miserable shed, were suffering from the first effects of scurvy and the last extremities of dispirited disorganization when relief came. With fresh meat, Dr. Call's care, and Lieutenant Jarvis's leadership, only one man died—of a heart attack—before the *Bear* arrived at the end of July to take the whalemen home.

THE CELEBRITY of the *Bear* was abroad again after the dramatic rescue of the whalers, and this achievement coincided with the first and only opportunity that any large segment of the public ever had to see the great ship in action. Western Alaska suddenly turned into an overrun wilderness. And the *Bear* was cast, of course, in the role of a seagoing sheep dog, barking here, nipping there, and pulling bleating strays out of whatever trouble they were dead bound to get into.

It started while the *Bear* lay at St. Michael in 1879: a sternwheeler that had followed the ice out of the Yukon brought down a half-million dollars in gold dust from Dawson, British Columbia. Before the end of the summer, the *Bear's* crew was maintaining law and order among the gold-crazed adventurers who poured into "St Mike" from Seattle and San Francisco, prepared to pay any price for passage to the Klondike.

The rush increased in '98, then redoubled in '99, when gold was found at nearby Cape Nome. As usual, the *Bear's* shore parties maintained a beachhead until the army took over police duties. In 1900 the frenzy hit its peak: over two-hundred ships carried men and supplies to Nome—and the *Bear*, last ship to leave as the winter ice closed in, carried out as many of the luckless and indigent as could crowd aboard.

Then the wild rumpus petered out, and if the men of the *Bear* read about themselves at all, it was mostly in official reports—though it was always news when the *Bear* arrived or sailed from San Francisco and Seattle. And as the twenties rolled 'round, there was the news every year that this year was the last year that the *Bear* would sail beyond the Arctic Circle.

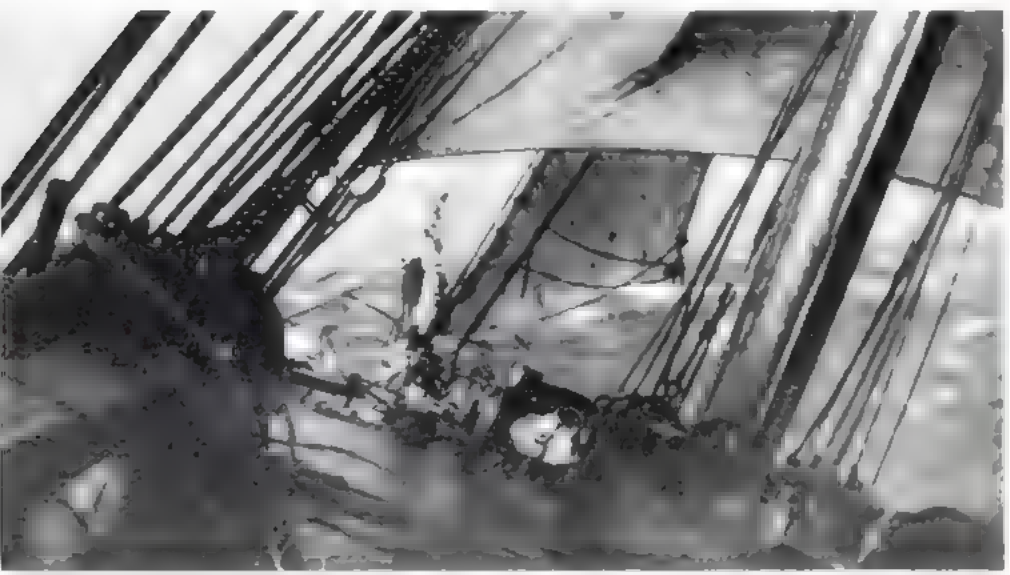
FORTY-TWO YEARS of active service with the Revenue Marine, Revenue Cutter Service, and Coast Guard finally ended with the *Bear's* return from the Bering Sea in the fall of 1926. The new steel icebreaker *Northland* went to Port Barrow in 1927, and the old *Bear* was laid up in Oakland Creek. The City of Oakland was given the famous vessel in 1929, but the *Bear* was not yet ready to quietly pass out her days as a museum-piece.

As Admiral Richard E. Byrd prepared to launch his second expedition to Little America, he was faced with the difficult problem of procuring a supporting vessel really suited to ice navigation—at little or no cost. Oakland responded, and the refitted *Bear of Oakland* sailed from Boston for New Zealand on September 25, 1933.

Antarctic ice did not seriously threaten the *Bear* in two years of cruising for the expedition, but she

Captain Oscar Hamlet of the *Bear* demonstrates a manual art highly regarded at Nome

The *Bear* was a steam barkentine. the steam punched her through the ice, the barkentine rig gave her the endurance to navigate thousands of miles in a season without constant resupply of fuel (*Below*) Heading southward to Antarctica in January, 1934. Admiral Byrd remarked ". . . it was a magnificent first season's work for a ship supposedly tardy at the graveyard—six transits of the Ross Sea, two of them among the latest on record; 40,000 square miles of unknown seas explored. .'



If every bit of verse written by crewmen of the Bear *were gathered together, the heap might rival the collected works of Robert W. Service. Here is one of the more charming contributions, courtesy of the San Francisco Maritime Museum.*

She's a dirty, rusty kettle,
She's a steaming, clanking hack;
But she gets us into the Arctic,
And then she gets us back.

The rivets in her boilers,
They get looser every day;
Her crankshaft is like a hairpin,
But it thumps her on her way.

Her compasses are crazy,
And her steering gear is worse;
And to bump her through an ice-pack,
Takes a doctor and a nurse.

There are times we ought to sell her,
And the Sailors say it's so;
But I guess we're bit o' balmy,
For we never let her go.

She's a bit of rum and lousy,
She's a hopeless sort of pot;
But, God help her, She's our baby,
And the only berth we've got.

needed all of her famous luck to pull through two hurricanes. She almost foundered off the North Carolina coast before her service was well begun, and again, in early March, 1934, she barely survived the stormiest recorded passage of the Ross Sea. Aside from supporting the main supply ship, *Jacob Ruppert* (a thin-skinned steel freighter), the *Bear* served as exploration vessel, cruising through the ice to the east of the Ross Ice Barrier after landing her supplies at the Bay of Whales, surveying the Barrier itself on her return to evacuate the expedition, and running numerous lines of sonic soundings across uncharted seas.

The *Bear* had performed as nobly in the southern polar seas as in the Arctic. Admiral Byrd said of the February, 1934, exploratory voyage toward Marie Byrd Land, "There was a joy and a spirit to the *Bear's* attack which were lacking in the *Ruppert's*. The *Bear* was a wooden ship: she was built for ice. . . . Therein lay the merit of the honorable and ancient *Bear of Oakland*." But what Byrd imagined was a parting tribute proved premature: the *Bear* was to sail to Antarctica again with his 1939-41 expedition. Diesel-powered now, the *Bear* carried her aggressive snout even deeper into the south polar pack.

In the summer of 1941 America had further need for the antique icebreaker, for the United States and Germany were already trading blows in the waters of Iceland and Greenland. Admiral Byrd leased the *Bear* to the U. S. Navy as a dollar-a-year public servant. So the *Bear* sailed three years with the Greenland Patrol before slipping into the obscurity that is so frequently the reward of decades of outstanding service.

Vital statistics: *Bear*, built Dundee, Scotland, 1874, as a St. John's (Newfoundland) sealer for Walter Grieve of Greenock, by Alexander Stephens & Son; 198'6" length, 29'9" beam, 17'6" draft, 1,675 tons displacement; 7,449 sq. ft. sail area; compound engine, scotch boiler, 9 knots under steam.

Laid up after the war—at Halifax, near her first home port of St. John's—the slowly-decaying *Bear* was partially refurbished and it was thought to once again put her to the bloody trade of Greenland sealer. Fittingly, for what has happened to the *Bear* has always been fitting (and therein lies the soul of her story), economic conditions never quite justified the expense of sending the famous white angel of the North back to an ugly business.

Then Karl Kortum (Director of the San Francisco Maritime Museum), having restored the old square-rigged grain trader *Balclutha* (ex-*Star of Alaska*) and having sold the state of California on the desirability of restoring the last of the lumber schooners and the last of the West Coast steam schooners, sought to rescue the *Bear* from destruction by rot or shipbreakers—but the price was never quite right.

At last an entrepreneur arrived, disguised as a savior, and in March of 1963 "the honorable and ancient *Bear*" was towed out from Nova Scotia—to become a floating restaurant at Philadelphia. But the ship that had confounded the statistical malice of forty seasons in the shifting ice fields of both poles may not have been cut out to be a claptrap tourist trap in Philly. Part way to salvation of a sort, the old girl sprung her fastenings in the heaving seas of a freshening North Atlantic gale . . . and she sank. □

Sixty years old and fit for rugged duty . . . The *Bear* at Discovery Inlet, Antarctica, 1934

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Francis Haines, born in West Virginia in 1899, spent most of his early life in the open range country of Montana, an experience that inspired an abiding interest in the western Indian and the animals of his environment—including the buffalo. He is a recognized authority on the western range horse, and author of *Appaloosa: the Spotted Horse in Art and History* (1963). His article, "Horses for Western Indians," appeared in the Spring, 1966, issue of *The American West*.

John Barr Tompkins is the Head of Public Services, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. As a librarian, he has dealt particularly with that Library's rapidly growing collections of pictures and portraits. Having spent some time at sea in sail, he retains a special interest in things maritime, in which the Bancroft collections abound.

Cecil Robinson, an authority on the literature of the Southwest, is in the Department of English at the University of Arizona. He is the author of *With the Ears of Strangers* (1963). His "Spring Water with a Taste of the Land," appeared in the Summer, 1966, issue of *The American West*. Deeply concerned with the educational needs of Mexico and South America, he directed a binational center in Concepcion, Chile, in 1951, and in 1963 organized a program in North American literature at the University of Guanabara in Rio de Janeiro under contract with Columbia University and the Department of State.

Ronald L. Davis is Associate Professor of History at Southern Methodist University, in Dallas, Texas. He is the author of two books, *A History of Opera in the American West* (1965) and *Opera in Chicago* (1966), and has written many articles on the subject of the social and cultural patterns of the West, including "They Played for Gold: Theatre on the Mining Frontier," published in the *Southwest Review*. A native Texan, Professor Davis also has taught at Kansas State College at Emporia and Michigan State University. He is currently at work on a comprehensive history of music in American life.

Richard Reinhardt is a contributing editor of *The American West* and a writer whose past experience reflects a wide range of interests: political campaign manager, authority on international relations, historian, newspaperman, Associate Editor of *San Francisco* magazine, conservationist, and novelist. *Out West on the Overland Train* is his first book for the American West Publishing Company. He currently resides in Switzerland, where he is working on his second novel.

David Wharton, who served in the diplomatic corps for twenty years, is an active member of the Sierra Club, a lawyer, former radio newswriter, and freelance writer, and has taught in the departments of English and Journalism at Colorado State College. Among his diverse publications are *Thugs on Strike* (1964), a satirical look at modern labor, and many articles on foreign policy and conservation for such journals as *Asia and the Americas* and *American Forest*.

Milton E. Shatraw, whose "School Days" appeared in the Spring, 1966, issue of *The American West*, was born in a one-room log cabin on a ranch near Wolf Creek, Montana, in 1901, and later moved to another ranch in Teton County, where he spent the boyhood days recounted in "The Trip to Town." He continues to write of his experiences and hopes someday that his reminiscences will comprise a book-length work.

John I. White, a professional radio singer, has been collecting, collating, and interpreting cowboy songs and poetry for more than thirty years, and is an authority on the more general forms of western literature as well. He has written extensively on the folklore of the cowboy for such periodicals as *Montana* magazine.

The Buffalo Range *continued from page 12*

South Pass, in Wyoming, offered the only passage across the Rockies for buffalo, except those passes mentioned in southwestern Montana. Herds moving across this pass reached the upper waters of the Green River, and could move from there to Bear River, where they mingled with the herds coming in from Montana. From the Arctic Circle to the Mexican border, these are the only possible routes for buffalo to cross the Rockies.

South of Wyoming, the western limits of the buffalo range were the foothills and sheltered valleys of the eastern slopes of the Rockies. From Las Vegas, New Mexico, south, the line follows the valley of the Pecos River. The Indians living about twenty-five miles west of the Pecos explained the situation to the Rodriguez Expedition in 1581:

> In reply to our questions they [the Cicuye Indians] answered that the said cattle [buffalo] were two days from that place. We questioned them why they were so far from the said cattle. They replied that it was on account of the corn fields and cultivated lands, so the cattle could not eat them, for during certain seasons of the year the cattle came within eight leagues of the settlement.

It is evident to anyone familiar with stock that the presence of buffalo herds along the Rio Grande would have been disastrous to the crops of the Pueblos, and that such destruction would have come to the notice of the early Spanish explorers. Note too that the buffalo came west as far as the Pecos Valley only at certain seasons of the year. Antonio de Espejo seems to have been the only early explorer to encounter them there in large numbers. Castenada, Rodriguez, Oñate, and Benavides all agree that the buffalo plains were well to the east of the Rio Grande, and a day or two east of the Pecos. The appearance of an occasional stray at the pueblos along the Rio Grande, such as reported by Lieutenant Whipple in 1853, seems insufficient to outweigh the evidence cited. The Pecos Valley was marginal, with some buffalo there part of the time during most years; but west of the valley only a few strays were found.

On the south, the Rio Grande below the mouth of the Pecos was the absolute limit. Here, as in Idaho, the desert scrub was a real barrier to the grazing herds, and few animals were ever reported near the river. No available account from the Spanish archives mentions even one stray south of the river. To be sure, Hornaday and various others quote Allen, who quotes from an unpublished manuscript by Bernadier (which was later lost) to the effect that buffalo were found south to Monterrey and Durango about 1600. Bernadier seems to have been misled by some Spanish work, because either he or the Spanish writer was unfamiliar with the Indian tribes of that area.

Of the many bands of Humanos Indians living along the lower Conchos River, two hundred fifty miles north and west of Monterrey, one was accustomed to go to the buffalo country to hunt east of the Pecos River. Consequently the Spanish called members of this band *cibolos*, or buffalo hunters. Note that the only difference between the Spanish word for buffalo, *cibolas*, and the word for buffalo hunters, *cibolos*, is the difference between *a* and *o*—a difference that might not be noticed in a manuscript.

The *cibolos* or buffalo hunters were a restless group who traveled a good deal, sometimes reaching as far as the vicinity of Monterrey and Durango. Hence a band of *cibolos* in the original account of some traveler could easily become a band of *cibolas* in the copy, and by the misreading of this one letter, the buffalo bands were moved across two hundred miles of desert. Certainly the early accounts of explorations in nothern Mexico indicated that it was necessary to travel to the plains north of the Rio Grande and east of the Pecos to find any wild buffalo; and none of the writers even hinted that such animals existed any nearer to the Spanish towns than the plains of Texas.

It might be well at this point to examine the widely circulated story of the buffalo that Cortez and his men were supposed to have found in Montezuma's zoo in Mexico City in 1519. The only extant eye-witness account of the zoo is that given by Bernal Díaz del Castillo in his history of the conquest of Mexico. Here is what he says of the animals:

> In another large building, numbers of idols were erected, and these, it is said, were the most terrible of all their gods. Near these were kept all manner of beautiful animals, tigers, lions of two different kinds, of which one had the shape of a wolf, and was called a jackal. There were also foxes, and other small beasts of prey. Most of the animals had been bred there, and were fed with wild deers' flesh, turkeys, dogs, and sometimes, as I have been assured, with the offal of human beings.

In all this, and in the rest of the chapter, there is not a single word concerning a buffalo. If Bernal Díaz was correct, only carnivora were kept in the zoo. There is no point in quoting De Solis as an authority concerning the finding of the buffalo unless the source of his informa-

tion can be traced. His writing was done 150 years after the conquest, and has been proved to be rather unreliable in several instances. The available evidence indicates that the description of the buffalo as given by De Solis dates from 1541 or later, and was interpolated by him in the account of the zoo he copied from Bernal Díaz.

Members of the Coronado expedition described the buffalo as a new and strange kind of animal, like nothing they had ever known before. Never do they hint that it is like a beast found in the zoo twenty years earlier. Such a strange animal would scarcely have been completely forgotten in twenty years, and someone would have connected the description of the "cows" found by Coronado with the animal found in Montezuma's zoo.

The buffalo range in North America had a definite western limit imposed on it by natural barriers—mountains, forests, canyons, deserts, and a lack of suitable grazing. Historical records need to be supplemented by field work and some understanding of range stock if one is to trace the range. Unusual conditions, probably marked changes in the weather for a few years, sometimes placed small herds beyond the ordinary limit, but such herds died out in a short time. □

For Canada, the early reports of the western limits of the buffalo come from Sir Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal . . . through the Continent of North America . . . in the Years 1789 and 1793* (New York, 1802); J. B. Tyrrel, ed., *David Thompson's Narrative of His Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812* (Toronto, 1916); and Fredrick Merk, ed., *Fur Trade and Empire: George Simpson's Journal . . . 1824-25* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931).

For the Montana area, accounts are taken from Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., *The Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806* (8 vols., New York, 1904-05); Warren Angus Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains, 1830-1835* (Salt Lake City, 1940); and *Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean* (12 vols., Washington, Sen. Ex. Docs. 33d Congress, 2 Sess., No. 78). This work also contains a reference to buffalo strays in New Mexico.

Buffalo remains at Harney Lake, in southern Oregon, were reported in "Peter Skene Ogden's Journals," in the *Oregon Historical Quarterly, XI* (June, 1910). L. S. Cressman, *Archaeological Researches in the Northern Great Basin* (Washington, 1942) has details of bones found near Steens Mountains, farther to the southeast. Indian accounts of buffalo were gathered by James A. Teit, "The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaus," in Bureau of American Ethnology, Forty-fifth Annual Report (Washington, D.C., 1927-28).

The report of buffalo in southern Utah is in Jessie Hazel Power, "The Dominguez-Escalante Expedition into the Great Basin, 1776-1777. Translation of the Original Documents with Introduction and Editorial Notes" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of California Library, Berkeley, 1920). Jedediah Smith's account is in Harrison Clifford Dale, *The Ashley-Smith Explorations and the Discovery of a Central Route to the Pacific, 1822-1829* (Cleveland, 1918).

For the Texas-New Mexico area, Herbert Eugene Bolton's works, *Coronado, Knight of Pueblos and Plains* (New York, 1949) and *Spanish Explorations in the Southwest, 1542-1706* (New York, 1925), give several important early references. Two other works on this early period are George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, "The Rodriguez Expedition to New Mexico, 1581-1582," in *New Mexico Historical Review, II* (July, 1927) and *The Memorial of Fray Alfonso de Benavides*, translated by Mrs. Edward E. Ayer and annotated by Fredrick Webb Hodge and Charles Fletcher Lummis (Chicago, 1916).

Finally we have *The Memoirs of the Conquistador Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Written by Himself, Containing a True and Full Account of the Discovery and Conquest of Mexico and New Spain*, translated from the Spanish by John Ingram Lockhart (2 vols., London, 1844).

Legend of Destiny *continued from page 18*

patron, Don Augustin, who resented the encroachment of a gringo upon a domain that he and his family had ruled for generations. Leo held his ground, flourished, and eventually became the dominant figure in the area. Through his marriage to the niece of Don Augustin, he gained entrance into Mexican society and took on a number of the ways of the Mexican gentleman. His house became a great meeting place for Anglos and Mexicans. In time Leo came to represent a kind of catalytic agency between the two societies.

Jean Ballard, the dominant figure in *Grant of Kingdom*, first appears as a seemingly typical mountain man, a man used to spending great stretches of time trapping beaver alone in the wilderness. However, there is another component in his personality. Though his father was Virginia Scotch-Irish, and typical of the stock that pushed west to be converted into those fiercely anarchical figures, the mountain men, his mother was a French Catholic from the French-settled city of Vincennes in Indiana Territory. Of her, Fergusson comments: "Despite the fact that she had grown up in a wild country, she was a wholly civilized woman, for the French carried civilization wherever they went." As a result of his two heritages, Jean Ballard carries within himself not only the impulse toward freedom and solitude, but also the urge toward construction, order, and community. He represents, perhaps, an attempt on the part of the author to resolve the two strains in western writing that Henry Nash Smith explored, both of which had their attractions for Fergusson.

Jean Ballard first feels the stirrings of a desire to settle down when he meets the beautiful Consuelo Coronel,

daughter of a wealthy Mexican *patrón*. However, Ballard soon discovers that it is anything but easy to gain acceptance by the members of the haughty Coronel family. In recounting Ballard's travail, Fergusson describes a way of life:

> For the first time in his life he felt the massive, inert resistance of old established things, of a people fortified by wealth, and custom, and tradition, by a way of life stronger than they were, a social pattern which was a power in itself. They did not hate him as a person, but they hated anything alien. Family was everything to them. Their whole society was a great family and it was organized to repel intrusion. They did not have to insult him or reject him or even close a door to him. They could freeze him out and wait him out. He might come and sit and sip chocolate for months and even for years and never pass any of the barriers of custom and manner that were set up against him.

Ballard, however, is no ordinary man; he finally prevails against the formidable tactics of the Coronel family—but only through the active connivance of Consuelo herself. Despite the powerful and almost omnipresent force of Mexican chaperonage, Consuelo contrives to get herself pregnant by Ballard. After the marriage, Don Tranquilino Coronel, Ballard's father-in-law, deeds to his son-in-law a great tract of land in the wilderness of southern Colorado that had belonged to the Coronels for generations as a Spanish grant. (Fergusson derived his conception of this grant, incidentally, from the Maxwell grant, one of the most famous tracts in the West.)

In deeding over this property to Ballard, Don Tranquilino thinks he is making an empty gesture, for the remoteness and wilderness of the area is such that none of his family had ever intended to develop it. Ballard, however, immediately considers the situation an act of destiny. Equipped with his long training and experience as a mountain man, he goes alone into the wilderness of southern Colorado, makes his peace with the Ute Indians (whose language he had learned through former trading experiences), and looks over the vast area that has become his. He builds a great house, develops a large ranch, and allows other ranchers and sheepherders to settle on the grant, which he rules autocratically, but fairly, while Consuelo presides over it all in the style of a great lady. At its height, the Ballard grant becomes a social and commercial center. "The evening meal at the house of Ballard," wrote Fergusson, "was always a social event. Seldom did less than twenty men sit down to the great table. Sometimes there were nearly a hundred, and those of minor importance had to wait for a second serving. A truly astonishing variety of human beings passed through that great dining room, for almost everyone who crossed the plains stopped at the Ballard grant."

However, another form of destiny overtakes the Ballard grant. Ballard overextends himself financially and eventually is forced to sell to a cunning entrepreneur, Major Blore. This man, like Faulkner's Snopses, was originally a Southerner, but not an aristocrat. Blore, through extensive bribery, contrives to get a fraudulent survey made of the grant. This results in the eviction of many of Ballard's long-time retainers. The last stage of the area's manifest destiny is subdivision into workaday plots expressive of utility and unheroic living. As Fergusson puts it: "A great gust of passion and energy had struck this place and blown itself out and left in its wake the ruin of a proud house and a legend in the memories of aging men."

In this novel there are the counterimages of the primitive and legendary builder, and of man the despoiler. Daniel Laird, who had been Ballard's chief steward, escapes into the mountains after the decline of Ballard's community. From those heights, "for the last time he could see the town, miles away and three thousand feet below him. From where he sat it looked incredibly small and insignificant, a minor blemish on the face of the earth." Fergusson expresses his radical discontent when he writes that "men such as Ballard, who conquered the West, were reckless men with the touch of the heroic about them. . . . But money is never reckless and never heroic. Money is cunning and it finds and uses and creates cunning men. Money has a long arm. It may kill but it seldom faces its victim." As something of an epilogue, he adds through the mouth of one of Ballard's supporters: "I had always loved the mountains and I took pleasure in the fact that their massive resistance had saved something from the sweep of human greed."

Thus the final note in *Grant of Kingdom*, one of the last and most effectively rendered of Fergusson's novels, is that leitmotif, long heard in western literature, of the love of solitude and wilderness, and of aversion to human centers as sources of contagion. By combining social realism with the aura of the legendary, Harvey Fergusson achieves his most telling effects. In the best of his novels, he vitalizes that stage in the history of "manifest destiny" when its advance guard first broke into the Southwest. Here were men with a sweep of the heroic to their style—and Harvey Fergusson has given them their legend. □

Ornamental Culture *continued from page 25*

Although critics viewed his histrionic abilities with favor, the star of the company was his wife Louie Lord, a rather plain woman, well advanced in years, whose chief claim to beauty was a glorious head of blonde hair. Some wags implied that Mrs. Lord's golden tresses were not natural, but her admirers' minds were set at rest one night when a hotel fire in Hays found the actress descending a ladder, her "great masses of hair hanging below her waist." Mr. Lord, a rheumatic fellow inclined to be somewhat jealous of his wife, died in January, 1885, at which point the company's management was taken over by his son Edward.

The Lords operated out of Chicago and represented a shift in focus produced by the arrival of the railroads. Prior to the Civil War, Kansans had relied principally on water navigation for their contact with the outside world. With water routes all-important, the Mississippi Valley, particularly the western portion, had faced southward toward New Orleans, with St. Louis as a way station. When the railroads appeared, the interior of the continent began reorienting itself toward Chicago, the great rail center. By the time of the cattle era, the transition was no less marked in the entertainment field than in commerce, at least until New York came to monopolize the theatrical scene. "In 1869," James C. Malin writes, "using Chicago as their base, the Lords were following the railroads into the West. Under a water communications regime, the river was closed by ice during the winter months; railroads were available to serve the traditional nine-months theatrical season, which included the winter." By the eighties, the Lords frequently went west either on the Union Pacific or the Santa Fe, took a stage cross-country, and returned east on the other line.

It is doubtful that any actress on the American stage essayed more roles than did Louie Lord. During their first tour of Kansas in 1869-70, the Lords presented some fifteen different plays, and the next season, twenty more. Mrs. Lord's repertoire ranged from Shakespeare to melodrama to farce, and she could go from Desdemona one night to Topsy or the Lady of Lyons the next, although not always with equal success. Versatility, however, was Louie's most distinguishing feature, and it explained to a large degree her success on the Kansas frontier. While the specialized one-play company and organized theatrical circuits pretty well eliminated such companies as the Lords' from the larger cities, one-play companies could not survive out west. The cowtowns wanted a variety of entertainment, and audiences there were not so sophisticated that they would refuse to accept performers who were second-rate or past their prime. Most Kansans were not aware that Mrs. Lord's Lady Macbeth possessed a bit too much of the gay abandon of Topsy. The major concern was that they were seeing a star—one whom they knew and loved.

In deference to the puritanical bent of the cowtown populace, the Lords made certain that their plays were moral; and they themselves appear to have been paragons of virtue. Malin says that in all her twenty years of acting on the Kansas frontier, "no hint of personal scandal" was linked with Louie Lord's name. The couple mixed socially with the local citizens, and the *Ford County Globe* reported in 1876, "We know that Dodge City people have nothing but good words for this combination." When J. A. Lord died, the *Abilene Reflector* wrote: "He wasn't much of an actor, but he was a square, genial sort of man, and deserves a respectable place in the memories of our people."

Other acting troupes visited the cowtowns. Late in 1878, on its way to Colorado, the Nellie Boyd Dramatic Company played a week's engagement at Hoover's Hall in Dodge. The *Globe* insisted, "This is the best dramatic company that ever favored our city with a visit." The group returned for several seasons, offering such plays as *Fanchou*, *The Cricket*, and *A Celebrated Case*.

Most cowtown dramatic presentations were staged during the winter months, when the Texans were not around. Dodge City attempted a season in the summer of 1878, as a part of the general campaign that year to establish year-round sophistication, but the effort failed miserably. G. M. Hoover built a commodious new hall for the occasion, and the Lords were brought in; but the operation had to be suspended when it became obvious that the players, in Malin's words, "could not degrade their own human dignity and their performances to the level necessary [for] 'success' with the Dodge City summer trade."

Someone who did succeed with the summer trade was Eddie Foy, who first came to Dodge in the spring of 1878. Foy was a bumptious young fellow in those days, just starting out. He tells in his autobiography of riding into Dodge past enormous piles of buffalo bones, under the mistaken impression that the town's citizens were dying

faster than undertakers could bury them. He appeared at the Comique over in the Texas section, wearing a wildly colored suit. His act consisted mainly of singing, dancing, and telling jokes. When he included a few facetious stories about cowboys, he ran into trouble. Several local pranksters waited for him after the show, roped him to a horse, and rode him around town. Although scared half to death, the actor managed to take the incident good-naturedly, and the cowboys soon came to accept him and admire his sense of humor.

That the cowboys supported Eddie Foy but not James and Louie Lord is indicative of one cultural level in the Kansas cowtowns. That the permanent citizenry tolerated violence and vice in the Texas quarter of town but sought elegance and refinement in their own section reflects another. Certainly this dichotomy was not complete. Cowboys periodically crossed over the tracks to view a play or concert, and now and then even named a pet bull "Opera," or something equally incongruous. Men from town often went across to mix with the Texans in their saloons and not infrequently were patrons of the sporting houses. Townspeople, while determined to give their community a semblance of culture, were pragmatic enough to seek a balance between art and commerce; and good business for them included catering to the cattlemen. Necessary as the ornaments of civilization were thought to be as preventives against savagery, the Protestant Ethic remained the dominant force in the Kansas cowtowns, helping to explain a cultural ambivalence charmingly suggested by an observation in the *Ford County Globe* in 1879: "We often hear it said of persons that they are cultured and refined, but there are several kinds of culture, and from the different varieties we must select that which will be of practical use, together with a portion of that which is ornamental. Say we have two-thirds useful culture and one third ornamental. We do not want all of one kind, especially if that kind is of the ornamental variety." □

An interesting general study of the Texas cowboy is Joe B. Frantz's and Julian E. Choate's *The American Cowboy* (Norman, 1955), a major asset of which is its readability. Of the cowtowns, Dodge City has come in for the most comprehensive treatment—Stanley Vestal's *Queen of Cowtowns* (New York, 1952) having become something of a classic. Robert M. Wright's contemporary account, *Dodge City, the Cowboy Capital* (Wichita, 1913), also contains some useful information. Local histories like Ida Ellen Rath's *Early Ford County* (North Newton, Kansas, 1964) and Henry B. Jameson's history of Abilene, *Heroes by the Dozen* (Abilene, 1961), help to pinpoint significant details not found in the more general books.

Much first-rate material is available in Nyle H. Miller's and Joseph W. Snell's *Why the West Was Wild* (Topeka, 1963), although it focuses primarily on certain famous cowtown personalities. Harry Sinclair Drago's *Wild, Woolly and Wicked* (New York, 1960) and Floyd Benjamin Streeter's *Prairie Trails and Cow Towns* (New York, 1963) are valuable, although highly personalized. Any student of the cattle trade would do well to consult Joseph C. McCoy's *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest* (Glendale, California, 1940)

Basic to the study of frontier theater in Kansas are James C. Malin's articles in the *Kansas Historical Quarterly*: "Dodge City Varieties—a Summer Interlude of Entertainment, 1878" (Winter, 1956); "Theatre in Kansas, 1858-1868: Background for the Coming of the Lord Dramatic Company to Kansas, 1869" (Spring and Summer, 1957); and "Traveling Theatre in Kansas: the James A. Lord Chicago Dramatic Company, 1869-1871" (Autumn and Winter, 1957). A master's thesis by George Meltzer entitled "Social Life and Entertainment on the Frontiers of Kansas, 1854-1890" (Wichita University, 1941) also contains a great deal of solid material. For a sprightly account of Eddie Foy's adventures in Dodge City, see Martin J. Maloney, "The Frontier Theatre," *Players Magazine* (December, 1939)

Contemporary newspapers remain the best primary source on theater and recreation in Kansas cowtowns; particularly valuable for this article were the *Dodge City Times*, the *Ford County Globe*, and the *Dickinson County Chronicle*.

Religion and Superstition *continued from page 43*

to heal all burns, cuts, knife wounds, and so on.' 'Take this small bone,' the green ram told me. 'From it you will know the proper time and place to fish, to hunt, and to harvest fruit, and so forth.' 'See this tail,' the wolf said to me. 'From it you will know where your enemies are, what they are saying, what they are doing, and what they are planning. Fear nothing; if your enemies attack your tribe, tell your people to follow you; go out bravely to engage your enemy in battle. Throw yourself into the thick of the fighting, for neither arrow nor bullet nor club nor any other weapon will be able to touch you.' 'Take this piece of red wood,' the thunder told me. 'With its help you will be able to recognize, immediately, other medicine men. If their strength is less than yours, you will be able to estimate, instantly, the amount of their power. You will be able to overawe the bravest men and crush them if they resist you. When your hour has come, you will die, but tell your children not to bury you, for you will rise again on the fourth day after your death.' As for the white deer, before speaking to me, he showed me an animal and an iron weapon of a kind I had never seen before. He called the animal a horse and the weapon a gun. Then, while presenting me with a deer's tooth, the deer said, 'Guard carefully the gift which I make, for if you keep it, you will have the first of the animals and

weapons I have shown you.' Then the deer added solemnly, 'You will soon witness great events; I see strange men coming from afar; they are white and their garments are black. I have spoken.' " Then the narrator is silent.

"My son," his father says, "these things which you relate to us, did you learn them while you were asleep or while you were awake?"

"Father," answers the young medicine man, "I was not asleep." And to support his statement, he allows his audience to have a glimpse of a medicine bag which suggests, forcefully enough, that he has not related everything.

Thus, these Indians were not governed by ignorance and passion alone, but by animals, or rather, through animals, by medicine men who used their authority to disparage the divine majesty. Add to these deplorable aberrations of spirit and of heart the scourges of all kinds which come in the wake of a war of extermination, and you will have some notion of the miserable state of these savages before the arrival of the missionaries. But these extreme evils were of some value in that they created in these unfortunate souls so strong a desire for some sort of change that at the first hint that there existed a better life, they gathered, like starved eagles, to learn about it. Within every nation the Lord has His chosen few.

ONE NIGHT, near the middle of Lent, there had arrived at my lodge a man who had traveled twenty miles on snowshoes through thawing weather. He was so old that, as he said, he had already reached manhood when the eldest of the Coeur d'Alenes, now almost a centenarian, was still in his cradle. As soon as he saw me, he cried, "Father, you told me to be baptized before I die. I feel that I shall soon die. This is why I have come to see you." He had come several times before, this good old man, and always for the same purpose. Asked whether he still believed in his old medicine, he answered that he did not, that he had long since abandoned it and would never again take it up.

"What medicine did you formerly have?" I asked.

"Wolf medicine," he replied.

"How did you acquire it?"

"I was unable to keep my horses because the wolves were so bad. One day, when I was particularly sad, a wolf passed before me. I said to him, 'Wolf, have mercy on me.' Immediately the wolf replied, 'If you pray to me, the wolves will no longer eat your horses.' I prayed to this wolf. And, sure enough, the wolves no longer ate my horses. This lasted until I knew that it was not good to pray to wolves. Then I stopped praying to mine and wolves began their war again and have now eaten all my horses down to the last one. So what do you think I ought to do? Continue praying well?"

"What do you mean by praying well?"

"Praying as one should."

"What will you do if I baptize you?" I asked.

"I shall continue to pray as you do."

"And your wife? What will she do?"

"She will do whatever I do."

"How do you know that?"

"Recently she said to me, 'Breathe on me, for I am ill.' 'What!' I said to her, 'Do you think that if I breathe on you, you will live a long time? Don't you see, poor old woman, that when one is as old as we are, one should think only of dying well, and that to die well it is necessary to have a good prayer?' "

"And what did she answer?"

"That she would do whatever I do."

"Well, then, this is what you will do. You will remain here for several days. I shall instruct you and when you have been instructed, you will go to your wife and tell her what I have taught you. Then, one day, we shall have baptism. From now on you are to call yourself Polycarp."

SIX DAYS after the erection of the cross, we were able to celebrate Mass in the new temple. Since all of the edifying events of this time with the Coeur d'Alenes have been related elsewhere, to avoid repetition, I shall proceed immediately to describe the celebration of Mass at midnight on Christmas. A little before midnight, a loud rifle discharge which echoed far off in the mountains announced to the Indians of the area that the house of prayer had just opened. At this announcement, waves of worshipers approached, and at the sight of night's shadows turned into splendid day, one of them could not restrain himself from saying over and over in a loud voice what they had been taught when the cross was erected: "Jesus, I give you my heart." Undoubtedly many others echoed the same words, for from this night on the preparation for baptism was the chief concern of the majority. With some who still resisted grace, the spirit of the multitude communicated itself so abundantly that no sacrifice was too much for their generosity. On the Feast of the Circumcision a large number of them experienced the

happiness of receiving the sacrament of their regeneration. God, it seemed, could deny nothing to the fervor of the prayer, but their catch of fish had never been so poor. Not only had all of them been without meat since the fishing had begun, but many had eaten their last fish. As a result of this austere fast, two old people, who had been among the first baptized, were so sick that it became necessary to administer the last sacraments to them.

What might be the reason for such a cessation of temporal help? The better ones, as is usually the case, said it was because they were still bad. But those who were really bad (and there was unfortunately still a large number of these, who were all the more dangerous for being hypocrites) began to blame the Cross, baptism, and even the prayer of the Blackrobes.

"Remember," they said, "the fishing and hunting of other times. Ah! they were successful, because we prayed diligently to our manitous. Now, instead of praying to them, we reject them, and it is for this reason that we now have no food, that our people are falling ill, and two of them are on the point of death."

These and similar accusations were repeated, at first secretly and timidly, but soon so publicly and so freely that they came to the attention of the missionary. As the latter was at this juncture engaged in explaining the Ten Commandments, he put special emphasis on the First Commandment, reviewing the events from the fall of our first parents to the temptation of the Lord in the desert. He thus had occasion to stress the severity of the punishment of those who lend ear to the spirit of falsehood, and also to point out the rewards for those who resist this spirit. When these things had been properly understood and the Master of Life and Death had confirmed the priest's words by the almost instantaneous healing of the sick, the missionary concluded with these words:

"You see, it is neither the cross, nor baptism, nor the prayers of the Blackrobes which bring sickness to those who listen to them. Proof of this is that those who have listened most attentively have returned from the portals of death, precisely because they placed their confidence in the power of our prayers, the Cross, and the sacraments. As for the results of your hunting and fishing, if they have not been what they used to be, or more abundant still, blame no one but yourself. God does not love deceitful hearts, and before God your hearts have been deceitful. On the one hand you have spoken as we speak and on the other you have spoken as the enemy of God and man. But you know what God's punishment is, you may well tremble lest you be so punished. Search your hearts and your lodges to see whether there does not remain something of the old superstitions. And if something does still remain of them, make haste to bring it to me that I may burn it to remove the cause of the misfortunes threatening you."

This exhortation was repeated throughout the tribe by those who were truly devout, and particularly by two girls, daughters of chiefs, whose courageous zeal recalled that of the Apostles. There resulted, by the grace of God, such a compulsion in the hearts that still rebelled that every evening, until the Feast of the Purification, there were brought into the lodge of the missionary, to feed his fire, medicine sacks and remnants of such sacks, an occasional animal tail, feather, deer hoof, or some small bone, up to that time the object of all the confidence due only to the sovereign Lord. This continued until, finally, it was possible to say that the tree of death had been cut out by its very roots. Then did the Cross appear powerful! To give credit to their own sacrilegious practices, the medicine men repeated, with all possible variations, "In a single day one hundred eighty deer were killed." But the worshipers of the Cross could add, "And we, with the help of the Saviour, have killed three hundred in a few hours."

To make more evident what was remarkable about this occurrence, let us enter into some of the details. For a day to be really good for hunting, three conditions must be fulfilled. First, there must be a goodly number of animals. Second, the snow in the mountains must be deep enough to cause the animals to descend onto the plain. Third, the snow on the plains must be soft enough for the animals to sink into it, but still firm enough to support the hunter on his snowshoes. When and how does the snow acquire this consistency? When it is warm enough during the day for the snow on the surface to melt and cold enough at night for this surface to freeze over. It is rare for the first three conditions to coincide, but still more rare for the other two conditions also to be present. But within the memory of the Coeur d'Alenes these conditions had never been as favorable as they were on the Feast of the Purification. On this day, just as it was becoming light, the man in charge of the camp guard looked toward the mountains and saw black bands descending onto the plain from all sides. There were deer, deer, and more deer.

"My brothers," he cried in a stentorian voice, "put on

your snowshoes and take your arrows. Here are deer coming in our direction. It is the Great Spirit that sends them to us. Quickly!"

In a few minutes all the hunters had reached the deer and, laying their rifles and bows and arrows aside, they dispatched the deer by taking hold of their antlers and twisting their necks. This method had three advantages. First, it saved time; second, powder was saved; third, the game was not damaged. When the hunt was over, the hunters brought to the missionary a pile of little sticks equal in number to the number of the deer killed. There were six hundred of them, that is, an average of six for each hunter. The president of the new society for young people had, alone, taken twelve. Thus, the most pious was the most fortunate. "Ah!" said the most incredulous among them. "Now we see very well that the prayers of the Blackrobes are more powerful than ours. Father, you may baptize us when you wish. Here we are." □

Stampede Towns *continued from page 52*

which I give credit on the books because I don't have any money yet, I send the salmon to Fairbanks and trade it for food supplies, clothing, liquor, stuff the people of the Yukon want. These supplies I give to the Indians against the credit they have from the salmon or I extend them credit. Later, they bring in furs and pelts from their trap lines, which I take to balance their credit position. I then sell the furs in Fairbanks and finally get some money."

In contrast to general sentiment along the Yukon, Weisner was in favor of Rampart Dam. "Hell yes, I favor it," he said. "The Government would have to buy me out before flooding my property, and I could get the hell out of here." He had once liked the Yukon, but the life was for a young man facing a challenge and trying to beat it, and he was no longer young. "Now I'm nothing but a bookkeeper," he said. He had a hired Indian to manage the store. He had two men and a cook up the creek operating a mine. He had from five to twenty women during the canning season. This meant accounting for social security and a dozen other taxes for each, in addition to running the mine, overseeing the store, balancing barter arrangements, caring for the sick, and adjudicating disputes. "Sure, I think the Rampart Dam is good. For me. For the Indians, no. They might get new houses and jobs for a few years on the project, but this is not their life. They fish, hunt, trap, cut some logs. They don't care about new houses and jobs. The dam would stop the fish run and ruin their lives."

He pointed to a jumble of huge log houses. "Two springs ago," he said, "the ice jammed up in the Ramparts. It didn't break up fast enough. The water rose thirty feet where we're standing, and cakes of ice as big as houses were pushed up like driftwood. Boats, trees, and houses were smashed. What about this force behind a dam? Maybe they've thought about it. I guess they have smart engineers. But sometimes people who haven't lived in this country don't realize the power of a river and how angry the old man gets when something tries to stop him. I don't know. It would be good for me, but I don't think I'd like to see it. This just wouldn't be the Yukon any more. There wouldn't be a river, just a big lake that wouldn't do anybody any good. The fish wouldn't be here. The timber would all be under water. I guess the ducks and geese would disappear. The beaver waters, the marten country, the feeding grounds for moose and caribou would be wiped out. These things you can't put a money tag on or call them progress or civilization, but I got a feeling they have value or God wouldn't have put them there."

"If you feel this way about the Yukon," I asked, "why do you want to leave?"

"I'm a sourdough, that's why," he said. "You hear a lot of smartass definitions of sourdough, but what it really means is a person who is sour on the country but hasn't got the dough to leave. And if they build Rampart Dam, I would sure as hell have the money to leave."

We entered the store with its racks of clothing, shelves of supplies, and no customers. We needed a bottle of snakebite remedy and Weisner told me how to get to the liquor store by going outside and taking the first door to the right. I followed his directions and found myse back in the store, standing before a counter that cut off one corner of the room. There was Weisner on the other side of the counter, waiting to help me select my brand.

"This is what I don't like about the Yukon now," he said. "When Wyatt Earp was pushing rotgut across the counter, there was no one to tell him how to run his business. Now, I can't sell liquor in the trading post. Liquor sales got to be in a separate place; only they don't tell me how to be in two places at once, so I sort of figured this up. You're in the liquor store now, and you can't buy anything but liquor here. If you want any

other supplies, you go back out and come in the other door. Had no complaints yet, but one of these days some damn fool with a badge is going to fly in and tell me I'm not complying with the law. It's all laws and bookkeeping now."

TANANA, ONE HUNDRED MILES BELOW RAMPART, is the terminus of the upper Yukon. Here the Tanana River, which flows through Fairbanks, joins the Yukon. Before the coming of white fur traders, the Indians met here to trade among themselves and maintained a permanent settlement called Nukluyet, or *Nu cha la way ya*, meaning "between the rivers." This was the rendezvous for the Indians of the Tanana basin and the upper and lower Yukon.

A century ago, this was the farthest upriver penetration of the Russian traders. The Hudson Bay voyageurs from Fort Yukon competed with the Russians here, bringing guns, powder, shot, blankets, tea, and tobacco, and giving better terms than the Russians. In 1883, Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka of the United States Army descended the Yukon by raft, from the headwaters to Nukluyet, making the first survey of the river, the country, and its people. He abandoned the raft at the site of Tanana and continued his trip down the Yukon by steamer. It was nearly ten years later before Fort Gibbon was built and the trading post called Tanana was opened.

Tanana was never a great stampede town like Circle or Rampart, nor did it have the administrative importance of Eagle. It was the transfer point where the deep-draft steamers of the lower Yukon met the shallow-draft sternwheelers of the upper Yukon and the Tanana River.

Tanana was the limit of Judge Wickersham's district in the years he carried his court by dogsled from Eagle, doing thirty to forty miles a day along the winter snow trails; and it was the midway point for Archdeacon Hudson Stuck in his travels up and down the river in the early days. Here it was that the *chechacos*—the greenhorns of the gold rush—arriving from the coast could feel themselves on the threshold of Golconda, and would scramble to get a place on the sternwheelers bound for the diggings at Rampart, the Hoozana and Chandalar Rivers, at Circle, Chicken, Star City, Eagle, and beyond, bedding down on the boats crowded with mules and considering themselves lucky.

Today, Tanana is a typical upper Yukon village. The river voyager is greeted by the sight of a sharp mud bank

Photograph by Philip Hyde.

rising behind a narrow shingle of solid ground littered with cans, bottles, paper, and primitive fish-racks on which fly-ridden salmon are strung to dry. The town has one boggy street with a general store and post office, an abandoned saloon with broken windows, a school, and two churches (Episcopal and Assembly of God) that compete with each other for clients. Tanana was the end of our journey, a musty memory spot on the banks of the Yukon.

IF RAMPART DAM SHOULD BE BUILT, the old boom-and-bust cycle of the upper Yukon would be regenerated. The river would again swarm with steamers and scows bringing in men, supplies, and machinery. The battered saloons would be refurbished and board-and-batten brothels would spring up. It is doubtful whether the topless shows of the lower forty-eight would catch on up there on the edge of the Arctic, but modern Hootch Alberts would again offer transient solace to modern stampeders following the rush to construction money. For a few years, the Indians of the Yukon would find ready work and easy money.

And afterwards, no doubt, the wilderness would again close in on Tanana and the rest of the river below the

Ramparts. But above the dam man would at last have made a permanent mark on the upper Yukon country. Perhaps for better (as some believe), perhaps for worse (as I believe), the land and the river would be drowned beneath the greatest lake that man has ever made. □

The Trip to Town *continued from page 54*

corkscrew spiral it had made. When she had a row of these curls across her forehead and another row below the bun in back, she combed them into an airy fringe. She would never dream of going to town without those curls. It would be like going half dressed, she often declared. After a light dusting with a rice powder, she donned a wasp-waisted dress with a high collar and leg of-mutton sleeves, and anchored her broad-brimmed hat with foot-long, silver-headed pins. Iris, in rag-curled ringlets and starched white dress, stood stoically while Mother went through the inevitable final pulls and tugs of adjustment. Then, at last, we were about ready to go. There was still the stowing away of anywhere from two to six kids in the wagon, however, and this often led to some friction. But after my mother had distributed a few healthy wallops to assorted small rears, things quieted down and we were on our way.

To me, the ride never seemed long, because there was so much to see. I liked to listen to the wailing call of the curlews and watch them wheeling above the prairie grass. Cries of excitement and much pointing of fingers accompanied the occasional sight of a great bald eagle soaring in from the mile-high mountains to the west. Here and there a coyote would be seen trotting across a distant coulee. And there were nearly always jack rabbits and prairie dogs in sight somewhere. Stray range cattle and horses, grazing at will, were carefully scrutinized for brand markings and physical condition. In spring and summer, the prairie grasses and buck brush grew green and thick, well sprinkled with purple crocuses and the waxy golden blossoms of the prickly pear. Meadow-larks whistled from fence posts, and sometimes wild ducks and Canada geese flew over, heading north for their nesting grounds. Now and then, a small flock of prairie chickens would scuttle across the road in front of us. The only trees we saw were the lines of willows and cottonwoods and chokecherries along the stream beds. The horses trotted leisurely along, the steel rims of the wheels clinking against the stones, until the last turn came in the road, and there was the big bridge and, across it, the town.

Main Street was simply a wide space of trampled dirt between two rows of buildings. During the spring and fall rains it was a bottomless quagmire, crossed on foot only in cases of extreme necessity. During the summer the dust lay ankle deep, lifted into whirling dust devils by stray gusts of wind and into huge clouds by any passing vehicle. Another street crossed this one, forming a T. We drove up the base of the T, passing four saloons, a livery stable, blacksmith shop, and several other buildings, then stopped in front of Harris Brothers' General Store. We scrambled down from the wagon and trooped into the store, where all our purchases were made—from twentypenny nails and gum boots to flour, dress patterns and fabrics, dishes, shoes for us kids and—for the treat of the day—some bars of Hershey's chocolate. While my father and mother were buying supplies, I would be walking around the store smelling the strange smells of pickle barrels, kerosene, and new cloth, and looking at all the wonders on the shelves waiting to be bought. Friends and neighbors came in, greeting each other, exchanging news and gossip, talking about the next box social and dance to be held In one corner was the Post Office, where we got our own mail and that of all the ranchers we would pass on the way home. This was the only R.F.D. there was in those days, and when the weather was so bad that no one was driving to town, several weeks went by when no one got any mail at all.

Most fascinating of all to me were the Indians. In summer, they squatted on their heels on the store porch with their backs to the wall. In winter, they sat around the big sheet-iron stove. They were dressed in moccasins, faded levis, heavy wool blankets (usually army issue) over their shoulders, and wide-brimmed, high-crowned black felt hats. Their faces were expressionless and they almost never spoke, but if I watched carefully, I would see their hands making quick, furtive movements—the universal sign language of the Plains Indians. They also gave off a most penetrating odor, which we called "Indian smell"—probably a combination of unwashed bodies and the rancid animal fat with which they smeared themselves. These were the older, "blanket" Indians. The younger bucks hung around the saloons, and though it was unlawful to sell them whiskey, by nightfall they normally managed to get a few drinks. They would climb on their ponies and with loud whoops and yells race up and down the street a couple of times, then

clatter across the bridge and head for the Blackfoot Reservation, located a few miles beyond our ranch. How the older Indians got to town or where they went when the store closed up at night, I never knew.

One of the most interesting places in town for me was the blacksmith shop. Pete St. Denis, the blacksmith, was a friend of the family, and his son Louis and I were good friends, so I was welcome to hang around there whether our own horses and wagon needed attention or not. Louis and I sometimes helped turn the crank on the forge blower and watched the brilliant sparks and blue and red flames roar above the heater and on up the chimney, as the black iron horseshoe the smith was working on turned cherry red. We raced around, got underfoot, and asked silly questions, but Pete never minded. The delicious mixture of smells — soft-coal smoke from the forge, hot iron, burnt hoof, and horse sweat—was sweet to my young and uncultured nose, and it was always hard to tear myself away. But there were other places I liked to go, too.

One was the livery stable. This was supposed to be off limits for me since it was the hangout of the less savory elements of the town; but I went there, nevertheless. Often, there was a drunk sleeping in the hay, or a fight to watch out back of the stable; and there was always the rough talk of the stable hands and hangers-on. And there was the owner's son, who was my age and a real tough kid. We had fun together, for a while, sometimes swimming in the creek back of the stable or fooling around the horses in the corral and in their stalls. But we nearly always wound up having a fight, and when I met up with my parents later in the afternoon, cut and bruised, with torn, dirty clothes, there was never much doubt in their minds where I had been. By then, though, they were usually in a hurry to get started for home, so the punishment I had coming was often postponed or, better yet, forgotten altogether.

One Saturday late in May of the year when I was nine or ten, my father and the school teacher and I left for town in a rainstorm. Since the teacher had to catch the stage and then the train that would take her "back East" where she lived, we couldn't wait for a good day. By late afternoon the rain had become a downpour, so it was decided we would stay overnight with the blacksmith's family. We had a fine time playing games, eating fudge, looking at the latest stereopticon slides, and listening to the new Edison talking machine with the big tin horn, which only the oldest daughter was allowed to touch. The shiny black cylinder was carefully taken from its round cardboard box and fitted onto the machine. The crank was twisted round and round, and the switch turned on. Out came the magic words, preceded always by the announcement, "This is an Edison record." About bedtime, someone looked out the window and announced that the rain had turned to snow.

Next morning, we looked out upon a wild and unbelievable world. The wind must have built up during the night, for the prairie and surrounding mountains and even the nearby buildings had disappeared in a whirling, smothering mass of flying snow. Drifts were already waist-deep and had started to creep over the fences and up the sides of the buildings. By noon it was plain that the storm was far from spent, so it was decided that we would have to try to get home; for my mother and an adolescent nephew were alone on the ranch, trying to supply the fires with wood, feed the stock, and care for five small children.

After a hearty noon meal, we hitched Snort and Brownie, our light traveling team, to the democrat wagon. The wagon bottom was filled with hay and covered with horseblankets to make a bed for me—not for sleeping, but as protection against the storm. My father, in a borrowed buffalo coat, his cattleman's hat tied on with a heavy wool-scarf, climbed up on the wagon seat and headed the horses toward home—directly into the teeth of the wind.

At first the going wasn't too bad. The buildings in town and the trees along the creek just outside gave some protection, but once we crossed the bridge and came out on the open prairie, the wind had a full sweep at us. Horses, and indeed all animals, hate to travel into the wind. They tend to drift continually downwind, so just keeping them headed right was no mean job. Every buffalo wallow had drifted full, and when the team floundered into one of these six-foot holes, they frantically kicked and struggled to regain their footing. Here my father's knowledge of how to handle horses probably saved our lives, for once lost or unable to go on, we could easily have frozen to death. There was no help in the deserted, snow-filled world of the open prairie. My father would talk softly to the frightened animals, soothing them, holding their heads down so they would stay still until they had quieted. I climbed out and helped when I could, unhooking a tangled trace, unsnapping a neck-yoke so a horse could get up, straightening out the lines. After getting the horses on their feet

and ready to go on—which often took a half hour or more of precious daylight each time—I would stomp off the snow the best I could and crawl back into the hay beneath the blanket.

Too soon the short afternoon was gone, and the blinding snow-filled darkness brought renewed fears of becoming hopelessly lost. After each struggle in the smothering snowdrifts, we headed the horses again into the wind, and after hours of constant urging and moving at a snail's pace, we came at last to our line fence. Here we turned cross-wind and plowed our way toward the house. Even here we had to proceed with utmost care. If we lost sight of the fence, we would be as thoroughly lost as we would have been a hundred miles from home. So my father walked within touch of the barbed wire strands, leading the team. About midnight, we reached the big pole swing-gate and made out the faint gleam of the house lights across the creek. No castle in Spain ever looked as beautiful as that old log house did to us. No glimpse of Heaven could equal the sight of the happy faces of the family and the warmth of the big lamp-lit kitchen with its huge black range, red-hot in spots, and the pitchpine fire roaring deep in its innards.

Later, reveling in the luxury of the fierce heat from the fire, our stomachs filled with beef stew and fresh-baked bread, we told and retold the story of our trip to town. My mother remarked that you never knew what might happen when you started out on a trip to town. She reminded us of the time when we were coming home in a violent thunderstorm, and lightning struck her umbrella, scaring the wits out of all of us, including the horses. "I almost had a runaway team on my hands," she said, "but you know, I think they were too scared to run!" My cousin chimed in then about the time the team he and his brother Frank were driving *had* run away, almost killing them both when the horses chose opposite sides of a tree to run around.

Flooded with contentment and half asleep, I listened to the comfortable talk, while outside the wind tore and shrieked around the eaves and occasionally blasted down the chimney, rattling the stove lids and blowing puffs of smoke into the room. □

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Alan Henderson
Business Manager

"A Busted Cowboy's Christmas"

BY JOHN I. WHITE

DURING the nineteen years he rode the range in eastern Montana, Irish cowpuncher D. J. O'Malley published dozens of original poems about cowboy life. Later, after he married and settled down in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, his keen memory and facile pen provided Montana newspapers with his memoirs—entertaining accounts of a boy's adventures on frontier army posts during the Sioux War, and vivid chapters on the cowboy's rough and often dangerous occupation, which O'Malley entered at the age of fifteen, after his stepfather, Trooper Charles White of the Second Cavalry, disappeared from Fort Keogh.

Three O'Malley poems—"After the Roundup," "Charlie Rutledge," and "D-2 Horse Wrangler"—had whatever it takes to make a good song, possibly because he wrote them to fit the tunes of popular songs of the day. At any rate, they entered "oral tradition." As they were passed from one singer to another, they underwent many changes and improvements, and today, three-quarters of a century after they were written, they are considered excellent examples of what a well-known historian recently described as "America's very limited, truly indigenous folk music."

The first-named poem, today usually called "When the Work's All Done This Fall," is the best known among singers and collectors of western ballads. The story of a young cowhand killed in a night stampede, it was written to fit the tune of the 1892 Charles Harris song hit "After the Ball," and was first printed in the Miles City *Stock Growers' Journal* on October 6, 1893. Here is the chorus as O'Malley wrote it:

After the roundup's over, after the shipping's done,
I'm going straight back home, boys, ere all my money's gone.
My mother's dear heart is breaking, breaking for me, that's all;
But with God's help I'll see her, when work is done this fall.

I first heard of D. J. O'Malley in 1932 when I was singing cowboy songs on New York radio stations. He had written to a magazine, complaining because a music publisher had issued "When the Work's All Done This Fall" in sheet music and credited it to one R. O. Mack.

Always on the lookout for background material on the songs I was broadcasting, I began corresponding with O'Malley; and a year later I was able to visit him in Eau Claire, where he showed me a scrapbook filled with newspaper clippings of his writings. Impressed by the scrapbook, more impressed by the man, I decided to help O'Malley obtain long-overdue recognition for his contributions to American folk song. I wrote a brief magazine article and a twenty-page pamphlet about him. These I brought to the attention of John A. Lomax of Texas, noted pioneer collector of western ballads. Lomax demonstrated his faith in O'Malley's claims by mentioning him three times in the enlarged and revised edition of his famous book *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*, issued in 1938 and reprinted many times thereafter.

O'Malley corresponded with me for years while, ironically, he worked in a factory making tires for the machine that replaced the horse. All through his letters were descriptions of a time long gone, together with flashes of his Irish-cowpoke humor. For example, in December, 1935, he was interviewed by an Eau Claire newspaper. He wrote to me: "Since that article showed up, I've been asked a million questions about the range, cows, cowboys, etc. For instance, when you are on night herd where do you get the bedding for such a big herd of cattle every night? I told one woman we always had a crew with mowing machines that were two days ahead of the herd. They always knew where we would camp each night, and would have grass enough cut for the purpose. The cook and horse wrangler would spread it on the ground just before sundown."

On December 12, 1936, he wrote to tell me he had been sick in bed for three weeks—bad heart, bad kidneys. "That's no way to be with winter here and coal $12 a ton and groceries climbing in price. Not a very cheerful outlook for the old hand, but I guess I will pull through." O'Malley did pull through that hard time but succumbed to another on March 6, 1943, "shipped to the sweet by-and-by," as he put it in a poem of the mid-1880's:

I hear there will be a grand roundup,
When the cowboys, like others, will stand,
To be cut by the riders of judgment,
Who are posted and know every brand.
Then perhaps there may be a stray cowboy,
Unbranded, unclaimed by none nigh,
To be mavericked by the riders of judgment,
And shipped to the sweet by-and-by

"A Busted Cowboy's Christmas" first appeared in the *Stock Growers' Journal* for December 23, 1893. It was written, O'Malley told me, on a winter night after he had been parted from two dollars by a "busted cowboy" with a long spiel. In those days, he said, there were many "summer hands" or "mail-order cowboys" around who were good enough to fill in as herders or extras during roundup time, but who were out of work come winter. □

PORTRAITS FOR A WESTERN ALBUM: I

D. J. O'Malley

I am a busted cowboy
And I work upon the range;
In Summer time I get some work
But one thing that is strange,
As soon as Fall work's over
We get it in the neck
And we get a Christmas present
On a neatly written check.

Then come to town to rusticate,
We've no place else to stay
When Winter winds are howling,
Because we can't eat hay.
A puncher's life's a picnic;
It is one continued joke,
But there's none more anxious to see Spring
Than a cowboy who is broke.

The wages that a cowboy earns
In Summer go like smoke,
And when the Winter snows have come
You bet your life he's broke.
You can talk about your holiday,
Your Christmas cheer and joy;
It's all the same to me, my friend,
Cash gone—I'm a broke cowboy.

My saddle and my gun's in soak,
My spurs I've long since sold;
My rawhide and my quirt are gone;
My chaps—no, they're too old;
My stuff's all gone, I can't even beg
A solitary smoke,
For no one cares what becomes of
A cowboy who is broke.

Now, where I'll eat my dinner
This Christmas, I don't know;
But you bet I'm going to have one
If they give me half a show.
This Christmas has no charms for me,
On good things I'll not choke,
Unless I get a big hand-out—
I'm a cowboy who is broke.

Do you have a problem in western history research? Anyone with such a problem may send a notice for inclusion in the "Research Needs" column of the WHA Newsletter, *which is mailed quarterly to all WHA members. Send to the new editor (also the new WHA Secretary-Treasurer): Arrell M. Gibson, History Department, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma 73069.*

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THE EDITORS